A WARREN MAGAZINE

ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU

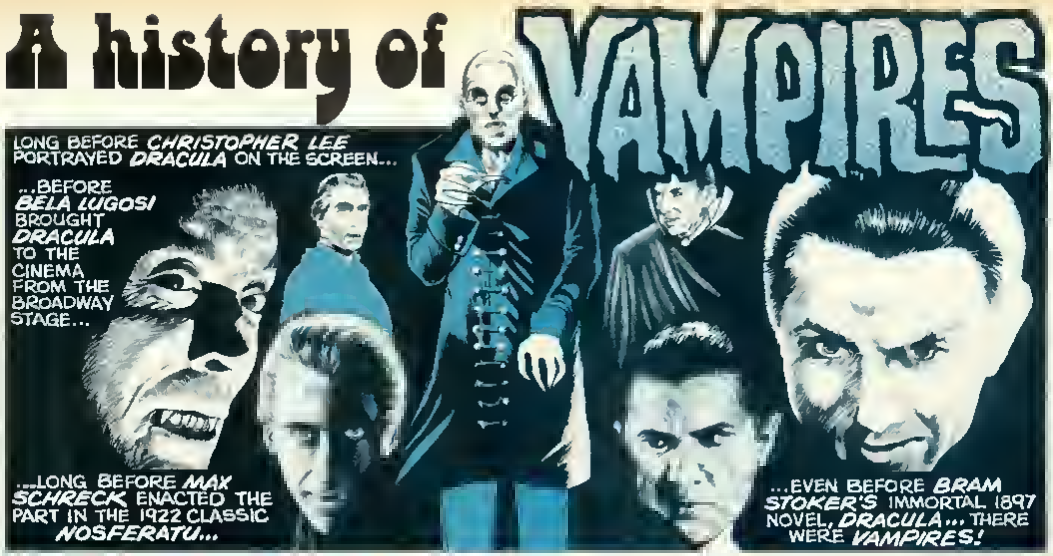
VAMPIRELLA

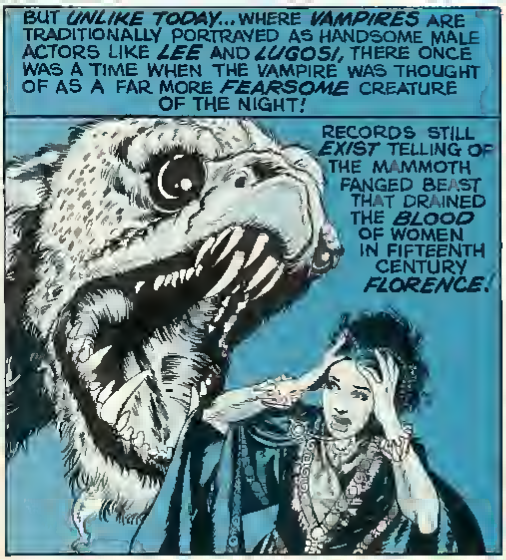
VAMPI #29
NOV. 1972
75¢
Canada PPD

IN THE DEPTHS of LOCH EERIE VAMPIRELLA BATTLES THE "UNDEAD OF THE DEEP!"

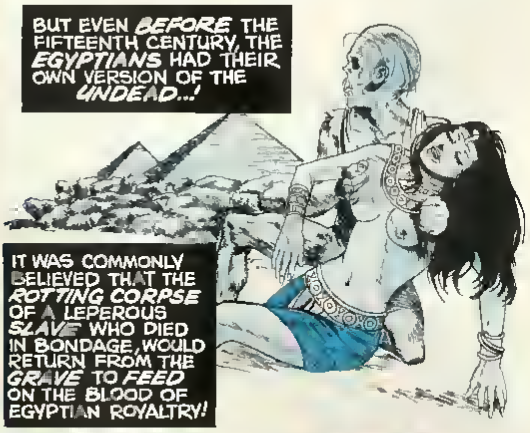
Page 7

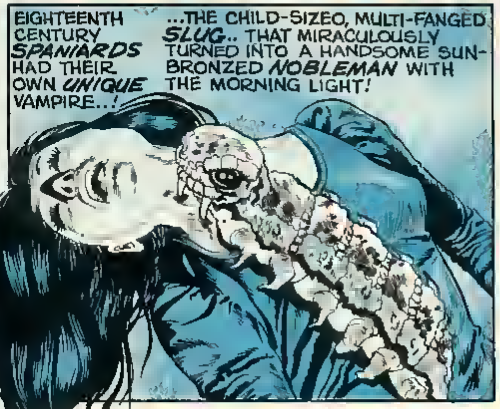
A history of VAMPIRES





WHILE NOT A VAMPIRE IN THE STRICTEST SENSE OF THE TERM, THE FLORENTINE BLOOD BEAST REMAINS A MYSTERY TO THIS DAY, AND HAS GONE DOWN IN THE PAGES OF HISTORY AS ONE OF THE FEW TRUE, DOCUMENTED CASES OF BLOOD-LUSTING VAMPIRISM!





STORY AND ART: BILL DuBAY

CONTINUED ON INSIDE BACK COVER

OUR COVER
Deep in the haunted waters of Loch Eerie, VAMPIRELLA is confronted by an ages old monstrosity that feeds only on human flesh! It is "The Undead of the Deep!" Page 7

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VAMPIRELLA

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ISSUE NO. 29
NOVEMBER 1973

4 **VAMPI'S SCARLET LETTERS** "You claim to be escape literature," cries reader Sue Foliart, "yet you fill your pages with hatred!" More jabs from other readers.

6 **VAMPI'S VAULT** Profiling cover artist great *Sanjulian*, plus Fanzine Reviews, and for those of you who clamored for it, a preview of *three new* Warren *series*.

7 **THE UNDEAD OF THE DEEP** Alistair MacDaemon is *dead*, yet now his corpse is *stolen away* to a watery grave. VAMPIRELLA *alone* has the power to bring *it* back.

20 **THE EVIL EYE** She was *beautiful!* Lively, *seductive!* And the ugly townswomen *hated* her. *Feared* her. But they were *bigots!* They labeled her a *witch*, and set out to *destroy* her!

28 **STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN** It was *dark! Cold!* He couldn't recall *who* he was. *Where* he was. But he recalled the *accident*, the *crash!* And he recalled that he was *DEAD!*

36 **LAST LUNCH FOR RATS** First his pet *rats* were *killed!* Then Harold himself was *drowned*. That was *twenty years* ago. Now, Harold's back . . . a rotting, *avenging corpse*.

45 **THE VAMPIRES ARE COMING** Bloody battlefields never affected the brave, *unshakeable* drummer boy. Now he screams at night, afraid of the man he saw drink *blood*.

66 **VAMPI AT THE COMIC-CON** *Blood drips from the hotel walls*, and the *vampires* are on stage! Don't worry! It's just the 1973 Annual Comic Art Costume Parade.

CONCERNING OUR MAIL ORDER ADVERTISEMENTS: Warren Publishing Co. guarantees the delivery and satisfaction of all items advertised in this issue. Should you need to write us concerning an order, whether it be from our address or a Post Office Box address, send your letter to: E.C. Ivee, Customer Service Dept., Warren Publishing Co., 145 E. 32nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.

What about that Vampi look-alike contest?

Watch out, I'm contagious! I just spread **Vampi-fever** among 250 people or so! **How?** My **VAMPIRELLA T-shirt** just arrived and I wore it to work! (My job is in the shipping department of a leading bra-and-girdle company, and in the summer the heat becomes unbearable T-shirts are the only thing to wear!)

Anyhow, hundreds of people who work there who've never read anything other than say, FIELD AND STREAM and PHOTOPLAY, saw VAMPI for the first time What happened was most interesting People stopped me in the halls to get a good look at our girl from Drakulon, and several of the bosses ran imaginary errands just to get a good look at the shirt! And guess what! Most people were able to pronounce your name correctly

But the **biggest** joke happened several days after I wore the shirt. At break time I noticed one of the girls I worked with was having a cherry soda I said, "Drinking blood?" And she said, "Yes, I'm VAMPIRELLA!" Needless to say it broke everyone up for some time

Also you're right! The **VAMPIRELLA T-shirt** doesn't fade when washed!

RON SAPP
Dover, Delaware

Hi, beautiful! I'm just writing to tell you that I think VAMPIRELLA #25 was one of your best issues yet! I especially enjoyed "What Price Love" But VAMPIRELLA a murderess at the end? I sure hope not!

Hey! What about that VAMPIRELLA look-alike contest? When are you going to have it? It seems like I've been waiting forever And please put a picture of the winner in your magazine

I think VAMPI is the most beautiful person or thing anywhere And I was wondering if you could hitch me up with someone my age that looks like **you**! I'm 14 years old

CHRIS McCART
Port Charlotte, Florida

Attention all my 14-year-old look-alikes! You are ordered to report to the front door of Chris McCart's house in Port Charlotte immediately. He'll be expecting you.

The artwork in "Welcome to the Witches' Coven" in VAMPIRELLA #27 was wonderfully chilling and sinister To me, the use of shades of black and white make stories of the sinister and weird much more effective than color My compliments to **Luis Garcia.**

Ignore **The Gremlin's** complaints, we read VAMPIRELLA to leave the common, plain often ugly world behind

RUSSELL L. POTTER
Washington, D.C.

Readers felt Doug Moench and Jose Bea had a firm grasp of master storytelling when they spun "Fringe Benefits," the color story from Vampi #26. Or was it a deathgrip?

Just a few lines to let you know that **Jeff Kilian** isn't the only person in Wichita who reads your magazine! The name, for your records, is **Steven John**

Onto comments, I believe **Enrich** is the best cover artist that VAMPIRELLA has had in a long time, but why "Nimrod" on the cover? For that matter, why "Nimrod?" Haven't we been inundated enough with the sword and sorcery type of heroes? Please leave the horror mags to what they were made for Illustrated **horror.**

STEVEN JOHN
Wichita, Kansas

I want you to know issue #26 of VAMPIRELLA was **great.** You are really showing improvement! (Ha! Ha! Just kidding! You've always been great!)

Your first story, "Demons in the Fog," was outstanding It was a little sad, though You really shouldn't downgrade poor Pendragon that way "Moonspawn" was also great **Esteban Maroto** sure knows his stuff!

"Fringe Benefits" topped them all though **Jose Bea** is a fine realistic artist And his work in **color** is superb

CAROLE MORRISON
Norfolk, Virginia

The cover to VAMPI #26 was a good idea, but kindly stick to one by a single artist after this "Death and Dr Morbius" was a good filler, due to excellent **Auraleon** art Please keep these two-page stories a regular feature

VAMPIRELLA, though! Your story was **poorly** done Your saga has been going downhill since **T. Casey Brennan** and **Steve Englehart** left The art was not to my tastes, and **Escolano** did little to help the small impact of the story

"Moonspawn" was excellent The story was a fine job by **Douglas Moench**, and the art the issue's best, was **Esteban Maroto's** standard!

"Fringe Benefits" was good all around, the color helping tremendously However, I do think the color could be a little less vibrant

Your last couple of stories were both excellent "Demon Child" was one of the finest efforts I've ever seen, with above average art by **Ramon Torrents.** And "Blood Brothers" had fascinating art by **Munes.** It seemed like a combination of **Jose Bea** and **Luis Garcia.** Let's have more **Munes**

A great issue throughout

JIM BIEDLER
Leesport, Pennsylvania

Boy, did you guys (and gals) at **Warren** mess up VAMPIRELLA #26! On the contents page you said "Demons in the Fog" was on page 6 when it was on page 7 The contents said "Moonspawn" was on page 7 (what? VAMPI'S story only 1 page long?) yet I found it on page 19 'Fringe Benefits" was on 31, not 19; "Demon Child" was on 39, not 31, "Blood Brothers" was on 48 instead of 39, and "Vampi's Vault" was way over on page 48 instead of page 6

And lastly, **Paul Neary** didn't even have a Frankenstein story in EERIE #48!

ERIC SCHULZ
Racine, Wisconsin

Whew! Looks like little Igor, our resident production man, blew it, Eric. And here we thought an experienced headstone cutter could do better than that You're on the list, Igor, of people I look up when I run out of blood substitute!

Bill DuBay's cover on VAMPIRELLA #26 was **superb.** "Death and Dr Morbius" started out good, but those last two panels ruined it **Len Wein's** VAMPI saga this round just wasn't up to par I'm afraid, although I did like the splash page **James Crawford's** and **Ramon Torrents'** 'Demon Child" was by far the best story of the issue, bar none Please keep **Torrents,** he's your best artist other than **Reed Crandall.** The wolf pictured on page 22 was realistic enough to jump out of the page!

MIKE KAROL
Taunton, Massachusetts

You guys are terrific! I just fell in love with your inside cover illustration **of vampires!** Your ad for the DRACULA mag Only thing that would have made it more impressive is a color photo of none other than the great **Christopher Lee** fanged, caped, and all I've seen all those other mags, also entitled "DRACULA," but they can't fool me I know the fantastic Warren work anywhere!

The color section of VAMPIRELLA is also great I thought you would raise your price, but you **didn't!** FAN-tastic! As far as **The Gremlin** goes, I'm sure she wrote the wrong publishers

TINA CLOVE
Chicago, Illinois

Future issues will contain that same color you enjoy, Tina. And how did you like Enrich's version of Count Lee on the cover of EERIE #50?

You're really on your way!

This is my first commentary on VAMPIRELLA magazine, and it won't be my last All of my commentaries will deal with one issue in particular This first one concerns VAMPIRELLA #25

"What Price Love," the VAMPIRELLA story by **Bill DuBay and Jose Gonzalez**, is one of your **best.** Patrick's death was saddening, and it was handled splendidly But I find one fault On page 10, it is stated that this is the first time VAMPIRELLA has ever killed By that I assume you mean humans I may be mistaken, but I seem to remember another man she killed, back in VAMPIRELLA #12

"The Haunted Child" I am surprised you included a story of such low calibre in your magazine How did Bill know the little girl was Crystal? Why did Dr Chalk put Bill in a strait-jacket? He could be sued! And on page 27, how did Bill, who is of course blind, see the blood on Crystal's knife? There was one bright spot though—the ending

"Nimrod" Keep up the good work! Your color section is a wonder! Nimrod's respect for life is a beautiful thing to behold

"Cold Calculations" was OK, as stories go The ending was superb, but the rest was only so-so

Which brings me to your last tidbit, "The Dead Howl at Midnight" I will admit it was better than "The Haunted Child," but that's as far as I'll go

You'll be hearing from me as soon as #26 comes out!

THE JACKAL
Wauchula, Florida

How do you say "stinks" in Drakulonese? I want to make sure you understand every comment I make on VAMPIRELLA #26

Not seeing "Vampi's Flames" doesn't bother me that much but **Escolano's** stuff this time did The figures were too stiff and you could clearly tell the difference between his work and **Jose Gonzalez', my** favorite of the two In plain English, **Gonzalez** was better off **alone.**

Now let me comment on your other stories "Moonspawn" had good art but the writing wasn't done as well "Fringe Benefits" was surprisingly excellent, and "Demon Child" was bad from beginning to end And I didn't bother to read "Blood Brothers" I was scared it might be like the others!

PATRICIA ABBINANTI
Jackson Heights, Florida 11370

You have followed the crowd by making your main characters especially the women, conform to the present-day American standards of beauty This gets very tiresome **Sam Milligan** excused this by saying that "beauty" is far more inspiring than "plainness," and that human-beings are beautiful But what he really seems to be saying is that PLAYBOY-type figures are more inspiring than fat, thin, or unusual ones That these human-beings who have PLAYBOY bunny (or **Charles Atlas**) figures are beautiful and forget the others

You claim to be escape literature Yet your pages are full of violence, terror, hate, sorrow and strife not to mention the stereotypes I spoke of before Ever stop to think that those are the sort of things we're trying to escape from??

Any old crime or mystery magazine can crank out tales of violence and cruelty Artists like **Ramon Torrents** should use their talents and imagination in depicting the wonder and strangeness and mystery of the **natural** and **super-natural** world

You guys can do very fine work, don't waste all that beauty on ugliness!

SUE FDLIART
Dillingham, Arkansas

First of all, I think your own story, "Demons in the Fog," was top-flight, as it always is

Second of all, I thought "Moonspawn" had the worst beginning to a werewolf yarn than any I've ever seen It occurs to me that if that much radiation was ever released on anything it would kill it almost certainly

"Fringe Benefits" and "The Demon Child" were both drawn well (especially the **Doug Moench/Jose Bea** color collaboration), and both were excellently written

"Blood Brothers" was basically a good story with very good artwork by **Munes**, even though it was never clearly stated who they were planning to uprise **against**, or **when** the story was taking place.

All in all a very good VAMPIRELLA this time Keep up the far-out color work

JOHN BRUNO
Trumbull, Connecticut

Sorry, John! No color this time! We wanted to see what reader reaction would be without it for an issue. But we've got a color story next issue that'll make a rainbow look pale by comparison

Many readers noted the difference between Gonzalez (left) and Escolano's (right) art, Many dug "Demons in the Fog" in Vampi #26, Still others are true only unto Gonzalez.

Hail the team of **Bill DuBay** and **Jose Gonzalez!** May they live and work together on the VAMPIRELLA sagas forever!

DuBay's script for "What Price Love" (VAMPI #25) is the greatest! I've never read anything as great as that in a horror mag And I've read quite a few

And **Gonzalez**, your artwork for that story is superb! VAMPI'S facial expressions were filled with such human emotion that I couldn't help but to feel sorry for her, even though I'm certain she will overcome her lust in the end

Combined, the efforts of **DuBay** and **Gonzalez** wrenched rare emotion from me, and I know a lot of others feel the same way

JOHN WHITE
Oklahoma City, Okla

I've just read VAMPIRELLA #26 and as a whole it was pretty good The VAMPIRELLA strip never fails to be interesting in both art and story and this issue's "Demons In the Fog" was no exception **Len Wein** and **Jose Gonzalez** do such a great job in getting a story across

RICHARD MAYHEW
Cumberland, Maryland

I think your magazine is the greatest I plan on buying a VAMPIRELLA poster as soon as I can

When are you going to put out VAMPIRELLA **rings?**

RICHARD L SMITH
Alexander, Arkansas

Vampirella rings? Don't you mean wings, Richard?

VAMPI'S SICK!

Seems not enough of you are writing her and she's been in the dumps all week Help an ailing vampiress today—WRITE!

The address is:
SCARLET LETTERS
c/o Warren Publishing Co
145 East 32nd Street
New York, N Y 10016

VAMPI'S VAULT

FIRST TESTAMENT OF A MASTER ARTIST:

SANJULIAN

A WILL WITH A FAR BETTER WAY!

Sanjulian has the distinction of pulling off what every other artist strives for but few achieve **He has mastered his craft!** Inside-out upside-down, horizontally and vertically, it cannot be denied that **Sanjulian** is the all-time **greatest** Warren cover-artist!

Born thirty-two years ago in Barcelona, Spain, **Sanjulian** put his talents to use early He was 16 when he began working in his spare time at the publicity offices of 20th Century Fox painting billboards for movies, writing and editing film promotions for newspapers, and designing press-books It was here, says **Sanjulian**, that he discovered his real love He had to become a **master-painter.**

In 1961 he left his job with Fox and entered the Superior School of Art in San Jorge Spain There he learned the importance of **color, natural design**, and most important, **anatomy**, his favorite subject Anywhere in Spain you'll find works represented at one of the many collector's **exhibits**.

He continues studying his craft in earnest and is continually improving his awesome style

Today, **Sanjulian** paints paperback book covers for **Dell, Avon, Signet**, and many others on a continual basis

His first work for the **Warren** magazines graced the cover of VAMPIRELLA #12 He's done almost **twenty-five** covers for CREEPY, EERIE and VAMPIRELLA since that time, becoming the first and foremost **Warren** cover artist today!

A former Merchant Marine holding a bachelor's degree in art, **Sanjulian's** favorite pastime is **movies**, but he also collects anything on art. His favorite artist is **Hal Foster**, legendary **creator** of the Prince Valiant Sunday comic strip

Twin examples of Sanjulian's master touch.

PREVIEW: 3 NEW WARREN SERIES

All right, you win! Ever since we started our new **rotating** series, we've been swamped with requests/demands to see a preview of some of our **upcoming** features So here you are, **three** of them, coming **soon** in the pages of EERIE and VAMPIRELLA Watch for them!

CHILD

His father created him from bits and pieces of animal skin, vowing to the heavens that he would have a **son** And one stormy night it happened The child-thing arose and took **life!** Writer **Greg Potter** pulls off a fantastic new twist on the Dr Frankenstein scheme, with art by **Jim Stenstrum.** (Wha?? Thought he was a **writer?**)

PANTHA

She's black, she's beautiful, she's **deadly** She's like nothing else you've ever seen Stalking the streets of New York during the turn of the century, the panther-woman must kill **nightly**, or die by the curse that created her Script by old-pro **Steve Skeates**, aided by the eeriest artist around, **Auraleon**

FREAKS

Just before the depression these people lived, a group of freaks desperately searching for survival. Maligned by society, hunted by humanity, the **Freaks** have stopped running Now, **they** attack! **Bill Dubay** returns to the drawing board after an all too long absence with scripting by **Warren** super-star, **Doug Moench**

FANZINE REVIEWS

IMAGINATION
138-06 78 Road
Flushing, NY 11367
$1.50

Imagination is true to its title In many respects The magazine sports a front color cover by Warren alumnus **Gray Morrow**, plus interiors by **Jeff Jones** and **Neal Adams** The formula is basically potpourri, consisting of highly entertaining odds and ends (such as an **unpublished** daily strip by **Neal Adams**) and a fine 3-page piece on wizardry by **Mike Kaluta Berni Wrightson** fans will have a ball with his "Conjure Woman" contribution, about a witch with the right ingredients **Imagination** it's full of, and all in all its visions are admirable **Imagination** is a one-shot venture, likely to be selling fast, so if you have the coin, get onto this one

FRIGHT & FANTASY
315 Rashtan Rd
Toronto, 10, Ontario
60¢

Film buffs are very strange people They enjoy doing very strange things Like publishing fanzines The quality of this gender of amateur publication is varied, as are all amateur projects **Fright & Fantasy**, happily, is more than just a half-hearted effort The book is filled with pictures and illustrations throughout its 36 pages, and the articles are both written and researched with an obvious love for film art The lengthy article on the Hammer **Dracula** and **Frankenstein** series is in no small way entertaining, with authoritative analysis and breakdowns **F&F** is not without its blatant flaws but for 60¢, live a little!

WONDERWORLD
P.O. Box 1616B
Long Beach, CA 90806
75¢

There are three or four magazines of this sort, dealing with indepth articles on the creators and the products of the graphic story field **Wonderworld**, formerly **Graphic Story World**, is in front of the lot Going beyond the usual specialized articles which cater to be-spangled super-heroes and sadistic barbarians, **Wonderworld** reaches into the lives and creations of the new innovators as well as keeping tabs on the old guard All aspects of the graphic story field are here at your ready fingertips issue #9 containing a biographical sketch of artist-writer-innovator, **Richard Corben** just for starters Urgently recommended You won't find better

A GREAT *WIND* RUFFLES THE SURFACE OF THE LOCH, BUILDING INTO A CRESCENDO OF *SOUND* AND *FURY!*

IT IS AS IF THE OLD NORSE GODS OF *ULTIMA THULE* ARE LAUGHING IN *VALHALLA*...LAUGHING AT THE FRUSTRATION OF MERE MEN, WHO SOUGHT TO ENTOMB THE WILD SPIRIT OF THE SIXTEENTH AND LAST LAIRD OF MACDAEMON... ALASTAIR MACDAEMON, THE MACDAEMON WHO *DIED* AT THE HANDS OF A TWO-HUNDRED YEAR-OLD *MONSTROSITY!*

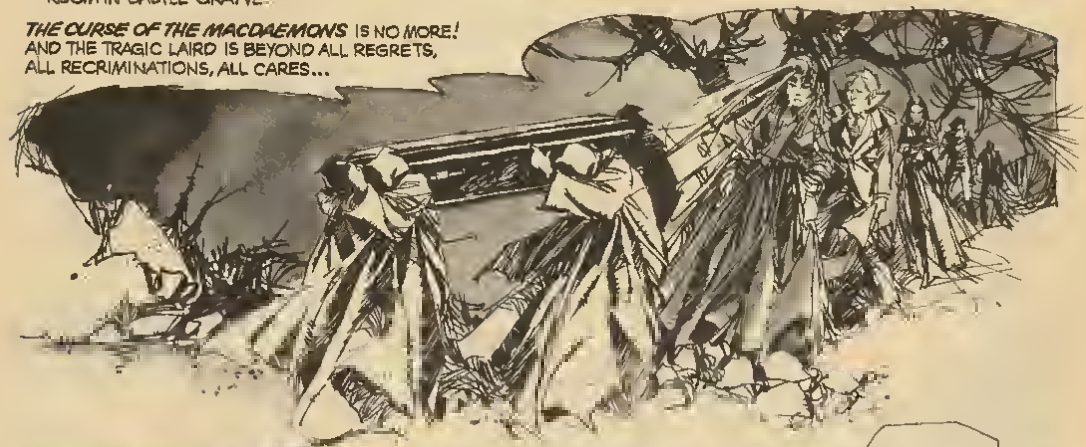
VAMPIRELLA AND THE UNDEAD OF THE DEEP!

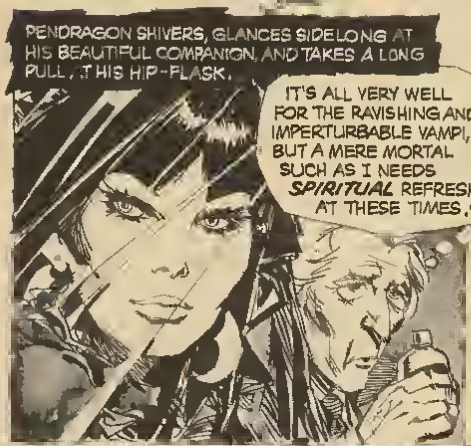
STORY: FLAXMAN LOEW / ART: JOSE GONZALEZ

THE *LAST* LAIRD OF MACDAEMONS IS TO BE LAID TO REST, AND A THOUSAND YEARS OF TRADITION HAS BEEN *SNUFFED-OUT* LIKE A CANDLE FLAME... THAT MUCH IS WHAT THE WORLD KNOWS.

WHAT THE WORLD DOES *NOT* KNOW IS THAT A *HEADLESS* CORPSE LIES WITHIN THE RICHLY-FURNISHED COFFIN...THE HEAD WRENCHED OFF AND PARTLY *DEVOURED* BY THE *SHE-MONSTER* THAT ONCE INHABITED THE SECRET, LOCKED ROOM IN CASTLE GRAYVE.

THE CURSE OF THE MACDAEMONS IS NO MORE! AND THE TRAGIC LAIRD IS BEYOND ALL REGRETS, ALL RECRIMINATIONS, ALL CARES...





AND AS THE CASKET BEARERS *SUBMERGE*, THE *PHANTOM WIND* DIES AS QUICKLY AS IT CAME...

WHAT... WHAT *HAPPENED*, VAMPI?

I SENSE THE PRESENCE OF RECENTLY-DEPARTED EVIL...

...THE SAME *ELEMENTAL, LIFE-LOATHING, COSMICALLY-VILE EVIL* THAT I SENSED WHEN WE FIRST CAME HERE!

THEY SLEEP, THAT NIGHT, IN THE INN BY THE LOCH SHORE.

MAY THE *SPIRIT* O' BONNIE SCOTLAND GRANT THIS OLD WRECK A QUIET REST FREE FROM GHOSTIES AND GHOULIES AN' THINGS THAT GO *BUMP* IN THE NIGHT!

WHAT HAPPENED TO POOR ALASTAIR'S CORPSE?... *WHAT?*

VAMPIRELLA SLEEPS SOUNDLY. TO HER, IN THE DARK HOURS, COME *SPECTRES*...

...*SPECTRES* FROM *A THOUSAND YEARS* OF CLAN MACDAEMON! FIFTEEN HEREDITARY LAIRDS AND THEIR LADIES. A TEEMING MASS OF MACDAEMON SWORD-BEARERS, CLANSMEN, SHEEP-STEALERS, BORDER-REIVERS, CUT-THROATS! A THOUSAND YEARS OF SCOTLAND'S RACKETTY, RAMSHACKLE, *BLOODY* HISTORY!

GIVE US THE BODY OF THE LAIRD ALASTAIR... BRING HIM BACK... LET HIM LIE IN CONSECRATED GROUND!

VAMPIRELLA SNAPS AWAKE...

DESCEND INTO THE LOCH AND FETCH BACK POOR ALASTAIR'S BODY, SO THAT IT CAN REST IN PEACE AMONG THE CORPSES OF HIS ANCESTORS! *YES!* THAT'S THE *LEAST* I CAN DO FOR HIM...

IT DIDN'T LAST LONG... THE THING THAT WAS BETWEEN... BUT WE MADE SWEET MUSIC TOGETHER WHILE IT WAS THERE!

PENDRAGON FLIPS WHEN SHE GIVES HIM THE NEWS NEXT MORNING..
GO DOWN INTO THE LOCH AND BRING BACK THAT GUY'S BODY.? VAMPI, MY ANGEL, ARE YOU NUTS.? YOU DON'T HAVE FISH AMONG YOUR ANCESTRY, I TAKE IT.?
NO, PENDY. BUT WE OF DRAKULON CAN EXIST UNDERWATER, GIVEN CERTAIN CONDITIONS...
VAMPIRELLA IS NOT MERELY A BEAUTIFUL BODY AND A CLEAR INTELLECT. SHE COMES FROM THE VAMPIRE WORLD OF DRAKULON AND CAN ONLY LIVE AS A NORMAL WOMAN BY DRINKING BLOOD SUBSTITUTE SERUM EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.!
TO US, WATER IS A NEUTRAL ELEMENT. IN IT, WE CAN LIVE AND THRIVE AT SOME COST TO OUR METABOLISM. I'LL NEED TO TAKE MY PLASMA EVERY SIX HOURS! IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO DISTURB MY METABOLISM, IT COULD MEAN SERIOUS TROUBLE. BUT I REALLY WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
-- NOT DOWN THERE!
GOOD-BYE, PENDY DEAR. KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED FOR ME.!
GUH.! COME BACK SOON, VAMPI, MY ANGEL. I SHALL DIE EVERY HOUR THAT YOU'RE AWAY.
THE GORGEOUS VAMPIRESS POSES FOR A BREATHLESS INSTANT...AND THEN DIVES INTO LOCH EERIE.!
DOWN...DOWN...DOWN SHE GOES...

THE DEPTHS OF THE GREAT SEA-LOCH HAVE *NEVER* BEEN PLUMBED BY THE DEVICES OF *MAN.* ANCIENT *WRECKS* LITTER ITS BED... FORGOTTEN *CRYPTS* OF LOST SEAMEN'S SOULS...

AS VAMPIRELLA DRAWS CLOSE, SHE SEES THAT *FIGURES* STALK THE WEED-TANGLED DECKS! *LIVING* FIGURES... WITH *DEAD,* LACK-LUSTRE EYES.

STRANGE SOUNDS OF *REVELRY* REACH HER EARS. AND SHE *TURNS...*

IT CAN'T BE... BUT IT IS... *MUSIC!*

WHERE THE LOCH JOINS WITH THE GREAT OCEAN, LIES A ONCE-PROUD *LINER* WHOSE TRAGIC END MADE WORLD NEWS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. NOW, LIGHTS BLAZE FROM HER THOUSAND PORTHOLES, AND THE MUSIC OF *RAGTIME* ISSUES FROM THE VAST HOLE IN HER HULL.

AND *LIVING BEINGS DANCE* TO THAT MUSIC!

THE LIGHTS OF THE CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS SPARKLE FROM A MILLION SEQUINS. THE VAST BALLROOM ECHOES AND RE-ECHOES TO THE BEAT OF THE BAND. EVERYONE IS DANCING. IT IS RAGTIME...BUT DETACHED...UNEARTHLY...UTTERLY *JOYLESS*.

SHE SEES ALASTAIR MACDAEMON, STILL WEARING THE HIGHLAND DRESS IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN LAID TO REST IN HIS *COFFIN*.

THE LAST LAIRD OF THE MACDAEMONS IS A *WHOLE MAN* AGAIN, WITH A HEAD ON HIS SHOULDERS. ONLY THE *EYES* ARE DEAD...THE STARING, UNSEEING EYES.!

THESE PEOPLE . ALASTAIR AND THE REST . THEY'RE ALL *UNDEAD*.! BOUND TO A SEMBLANCE OF LIFE BY SOME ALIEN FORCE.!

BUT WHO ... *WHO*... OR *WHAT*... IS CARRYING ON THIS HIDEOUS *JEST* WITH THESE POOR WRETCHES.?

THE ANSWER COMES ACROSS THE CROWDED BALLROOM... AS THE GIRL FROM DRAKULON SEES A FAMILIAR HEART-STOPPING FIGURE.

IT IS AS IF A MILLION YEARS OF EMPTINESS FALL FROM THE MIND AND SPIRIT OF VAMPIRELLA. STARS SHIFT THEIR COURSES. MOONS WITHER AND DIE. AND, DOWN THROUGH AN IMMEASURABLE ETERNITY, A SMALL BIRD SINGS A LOVE SONG.

TRISTAN!

VAMPIRELLA. MY OWN BELOVED!

THEY HAD PARTED, WITH UNSPEAKABLE MISUNDERSTANDING, ON THE SURFACE OF ***DRAKULON***, THE DYING PLANET OF ***BLOOD***. THEY HAD BEEN LOVERS... TILL FRAILTY OF SPIRIT HAD TORN THEM APART.

I DREAMED... I HOPED... NOT A DAY HAS PAST BUT I WHISPERED YOUR NAME.

THE THINGS I SAID... THE TERRIBLE VOWS I MADE... WILL YOU ***EVER*** FORGIVE ME, MY VAMPIRELLA?

THEIR LIPS MEET IN A KISS OF ***PURE PASSION***... AND THE ***UNDEAD DANCERS*** CIRCLE THEM, UNSEEING AND UNCARING.

STRANGELY, THE MUSIC CHANGES. THE THROBBING VIOLINS PICK UP THE MELODY OF A ***HAUNTING WALTZ*** IN A MINOR KEY.

SHALL WE DANCE?

DIVINE!

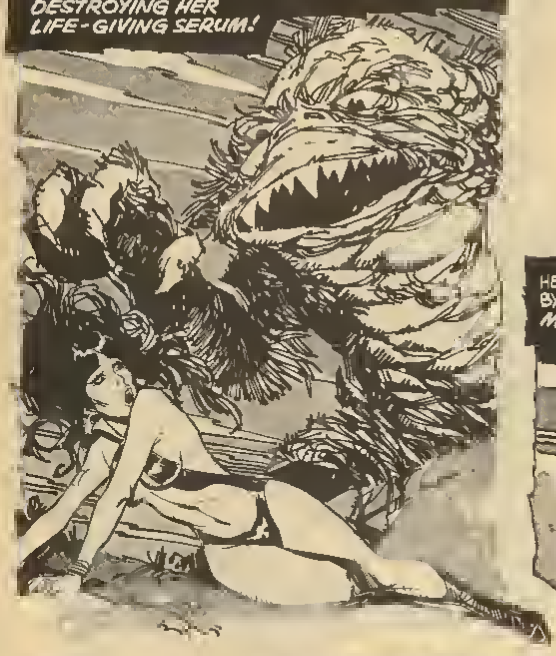
OUT OF THE GREAT GAPING HOLE IN THE HULL OF THE LINER, AND INTO THE UNCHARTED BED OF THE WIDE OCEAN...
WANDERING, HAND-IN-HAND, THROUGH THE WONDERLAND OF THE SUBMARINE FORESTS...
LOST IN AN ETERNITY OF IDYLLIC LOVE...
YOU'RE GOOD FOR ME, KNOW THAT?
MMMMM...
YOU'VE KNOCKED MY METABOLISM OUT OF WHACK, DARLING. I SHOULD BE TAKING MY PLASMA EVERY SIX HOURS. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT?... I DON'T FEEL THE NEED.
WHO NEEDS BLOOD SUBSTITUTE?
RIGHT! WHO NEEDS THE STUFF?
I NEED YOUR TOUCH...
TRISTAN, DON'T TEASE...
PLEASE...
E-E-E-E-A-A-A-AAAAAHH!!

BEFORE HER VERY EYES, THE BELOVED FACE...
CHANGES...
HIDEOUSLY...!!
INSANELY!!!
THE WHOLE FORM OF THE CREATURE THAT VAMPIRELLA HAD ACCEPTED AS HER LOST LOVER TAKES ON A NEW SHAPE...
EEEHHH!
...IT CHANGES...
NO!!!
NO-O-O-O-OOO!

FINALLY, THE GLUTINOUS *MASS* OF STINKING *EVIL* HARDENS INTO THE NIGHTMARE SHAPE OF *THE MONSTER OF THE LOCH!*

IT IS NOW THAT VAMPIRELLA KNOWS THE TRUTH OF IT. SHE, WHO HAS DESTROYED THE MONSTER'S GHASTLY OFFSPRING, IS NOW HERSELF ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED. THE *TERROR* OF LOCH EERIE HAS POWERS BEYOND IMAGINING. IT IS, PERHAPS, A LESSER *DEMON* OF THE *MAD*, BANISHED GOD *CHAOS*, DRAWING ITS POWER FROM THAT BOUNDLESS *SOURCE*.

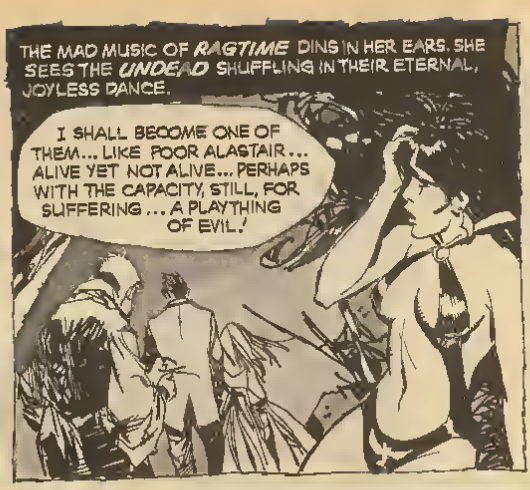
BY SEEKING OUT AND FINDING HER ONE WEAKNESS AND CHANGING INTO THE IMAGE OF HER LOST LOVER, *IT HAS LURED HER INTO DESTROYING HER LIFE-GIVING SERUM!*



VAMPIRELLA RUNS! THOUGH SHE KNOWS THAT, FOR HER, THERE CAN BE *NO ESCAPE!*

HER SENSES REEL, SUSPENDED FOR AN ECSTATIC WHILE BY THE DELIRIUM OF *PURE PASSION*, HER *METABOLISM* IS NOW *DOOMING* HER!

THAT'S ITS *REVENGE!* WHEN LIFE HAS LEFT ME, IT WILL MAKE ME ONE OF THE *UNDEAD!*


THE MAD MUSIC OF RAGTIME DINS IN HER EARS. SHE SEES THE UNDEAD SHUFFLING IN THEIR ETERNAL, JOYLESS DANCE.
I SHALL BECOME ONE OF THEM... LIKE POOR ALASTAIR... ALIVE YET NOT ALIVE... PERHAPS WITH THE CAPACITY, STILL, FOR SUFFERING... A PLAYTHING OF EVIL!

W-WHAT'S THIS?

DEAD OR UNDEAD, ALASTAIR'S VEINS RUN WITH RICH, RED BLOOD! I SMELL IT!

I FEEL THE BLOOD-LUST RISING IN ME! AND I SEE MY WAY TO FREEDOM!

NOW BEGINS THE BLOOD-FEAST OF A LIFETIME!

ALASTAIR MACDAEMON IS FIRST... HIS BODY SWIFTLY DRAINED, THE UNDEAD BECOMES...

...DEAD, ONCE AGAIN!

THE SEEMINGLY-INSATIABLE *BAT* GORGES ITSELF UPON THE DANCERS OF THE DEEP... ONE BY ONE...

AND, WHEN IT IS ALL OVER...
THEY ARE *FREE!*

...A GREAT *CALM* FALLS UPON THE BALLROOM OF THE SUNKEN *LEVIATHAN.*

VAMPIRELLA RISES *UP* THROUGH THE WATER OF THE LOCH, UP THROUGH THE SEA WRECK, TOWARDS THE BLESSED SUNLIGHT, AND THE AIR...BEARING THE *BODY* AND HEAD OF THE LAST OF THE MACDAEMON LAIRDS, TO LAY WITH HIS ANCESTORS.
YET FATHOMS *BELOW,* THERE WITH THE *CORPSES* OF MEN, WOMEN, AND A ROTTING SHIP. SHE HAS LEFT BEHIND A *STOLEN,* IRRECOVERABLE *PART* OF *HERSELF!*
THAT PART THAT *ONCE* BELONGED TO *TRISTAN!*

SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE MISSING...

VAMPIRELLA

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THE EVL EYE

GREETINGS, AND WELCOME TO MY COMFY LITTLE *DOOM TOMB!* STRETCH OUT ON A NICE COOL MARBLE SLAB AND LEND AN EAR TO THIS *GRIZZLY TIDBIT* ABOUT A ROTTER IN JOLLY OLD LONDON, AND THE CURSE OF A WITCH NAMED *VARNAL*, WHO, TEN GENERATIONS AGO, WAS CONDEMNED TO BE *BARBECUED* FOR GIVING HER NEIGHBORS. .

LAR... YOU SILLY... ONE GIRL... TWO, MAYBE... BUT *FIVE?!*

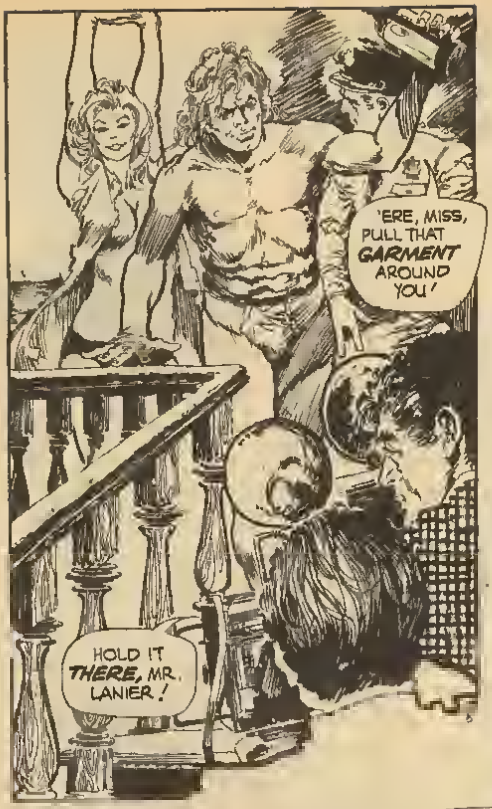
YEAH, FIVE! I'LL TAKE ON ANYBODY IN THE BLOODY... 'IC!... HOUSE!

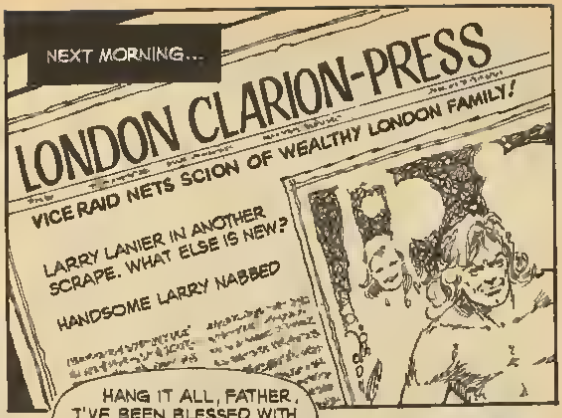
FLY *ME!* I'M OLIVIA. FLY ME TO THE *MOON!*

BLARST! HIT'S A RAID, ROSIE!

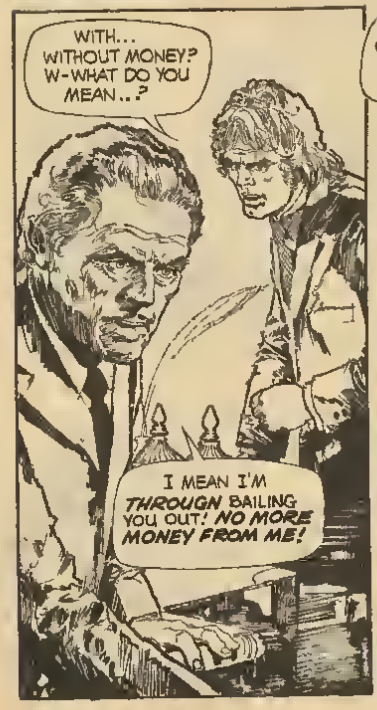
YOU'VE *'AD IT,* MADAM ROSIE. YOU'RE BEING CLOSED FOR *GOOD* THIS TIME!

STORY: W. EATON / ART. RAMON TORRENTS

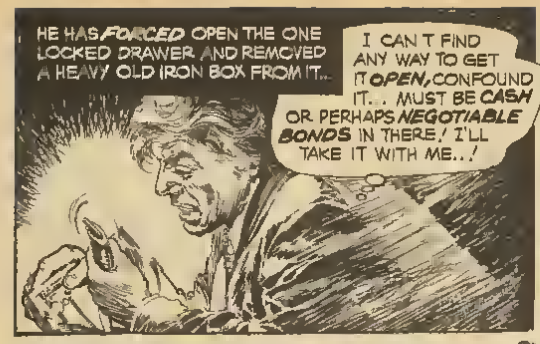

'ERE, MISS, PULL THAT GARMENT AROUND YOU!
HOLD IT THERE, MR. LANIER!

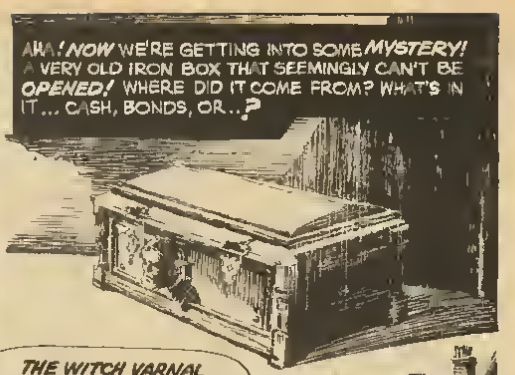

NEXT MORNING...
LONDON CLARION-PRESS
VICE RAID NETS SCION OF WEALTHY LONDON FAMILY!
LARRY LANIER IN ANOTHER SCRAPE. WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
HANDSOME LARRY NABBED

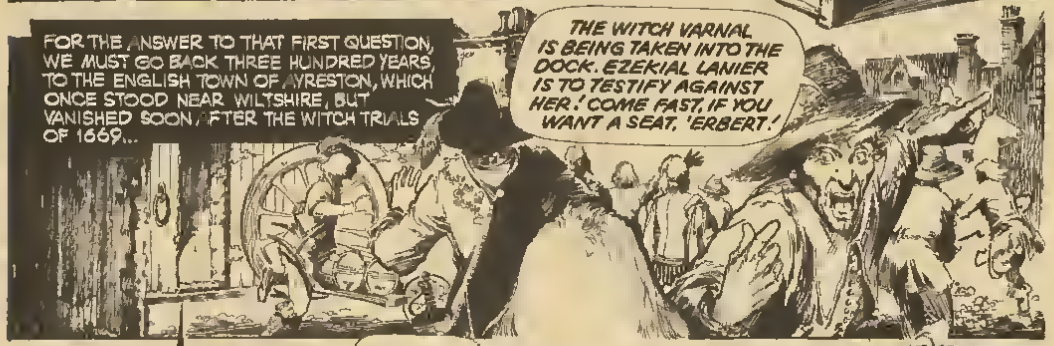
HANG IT ALL, FATHER, I'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH THE KIND OF EXTREMELY GOOD LOOKS THAT DRAWS THE GIRLS LIKE FLIES!
ALL RIGHT, WHY BE MODEST?
YOU DAMNED FOOL... SEE HOW MANY WOMEN YOU GET WITHOUT MONEY!

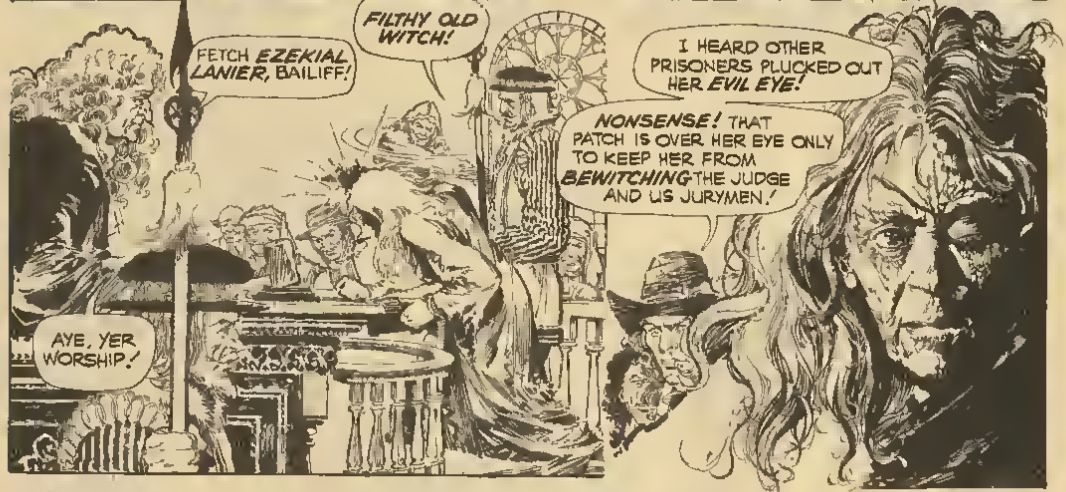

WITH... WITHOUT MONEY? W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
I MEAN I'M THROUGH BAILING YOU OUT! NO MORE MONEY FROM ME!

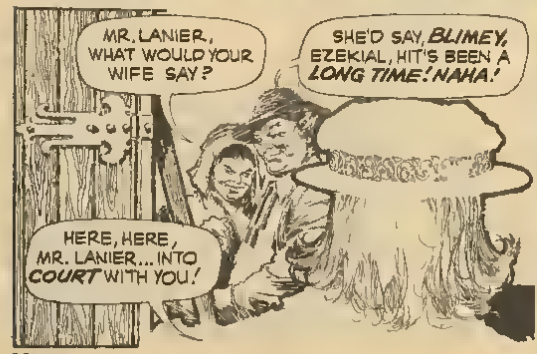
I SAY, FATHER, GO EASY! A FELLOW'S GOT TO HAVE A FLING...
YOUR LIFE'S BEEN ONE LONG FLING! I HAD TO PULL A LOT OF STRINGS TO GET YOU OUT OF PRISON..
YOU'VE DISGRACED US FOR THE LAST TIME! YOU'VE GOT UNTIL NOON TO GATHER YOUR THINGS AND GET OUT OF HERE!
YOUNG LANIER, USED TO THE EASY LIFE, WITH A VERY LIBERAL ALLOWANCE, HAS NO INTENTION OF LEAVING THE LANIER MANSION EMPTYHANDED. LATER, AFTER HIS FATHER HAS LEFT FOR A BANK DIRECTORS' MEETING...
THE OLD GOAT'S NOT CUTTING ME OFF WITHOUT A FARTHING ...I'D STARVE!


HE HAS FORCED OPEN THE ONE LOCKED DRAWER AND REMOVED A HEAVY OLD IRON BOX FROM IT...
I CAN'T FIND ANY WAY TO GET IT OPEN, CONFOUND IT... MUST BE CASH OR PERHAPS NEGOTIABLE BONDS IN THERE! I'LL TAKE IT WITH ME...!


AHA! NOW WE'RE GETTING INTO SOME MYSTERY! A VERY OLD IRON BOX THAT SEEMINGLY CAN'T BE OPENED! WHERE DID IT COME FROM? WHAT'S IN IT... CASH, BONDS, OR...?


FOR THE ANSWER TO THAT FIRST QUESTION, WE MUST GO BACK THREE HUNDRED YEARS, TO THE ENGLISH TOWN OF AYRESTON, WHICH ONCE STOOD NEAR WILTSHIRE, BUT VANISHED SOON AFTER THE WITCH TRIALS OF 1669...
THE WITCH VARNAL IS BEING TAKEN INTO THE DOCK. EZEKIAL LANIER IS TO TESTIFY AGAINST HER! COME FAST, IF YOU WANT A SEAT, 'ERBERT!


FETCH EZEKIAL LANIER, BAILIFF!
FILTHY OLD WITCH!
I HEARD OTHER PRISONERS PLUCKED OUT HER EVIL EYE!
NONSENSE! THAT PATCH IS OVER HER EYE ONLY TO KEEP HER FROM BEWITCHING THE JUDGE AND US JURYMEN!
AYE, YER WORSHIP!


MR. LANIER, WHAT WOULD YOUR WIFE SAY?
SHE'D SAY, BLIMEY, EZEKIAL, HIT'S BEEN A LONG TIME! NAHA!
HERE, HERE, MR. LANIER... INTO COURT WITH YOU!

PTUI!
THERE, YOU FILTHY LYING-THIEVING-LECHER...I SPIT ON YOU!
AND I'LL SPIT ON THE FIRE THEY'LL ROAST YOU IN!

SWORN IN, EZEKIAL LANIER PROCEEDED TO BEAR *FALSE WITNESS* AGAINST THE ACCUSED...

TELL THE *COURT* WHAT YOU SAW LAST FRIDAY NIGHT, MR. LANIER!

I SAW HER STARE AT OLD EDWARD CARVER WITH THAT *EVIL EYE* OF HERS...THEN ED DROPPED WHERE HE STOOD!

LIAR!

WATCH YOUR TONGUE, MRS. VARNAL!

WHAT SAY YOU IN YOUR OWN *DEFENSE*

YOU MURDERED ED CARVER AND OTHERS, LANIER. YOU PUT EVIDENCE NEAR THEM TO POINT THE FINGER OF GUILT AT ME!

MRS. VARNAL WAS A SELF-CONFESSED WITCH...BUT *NEVER BEFORE* HAS A WITNESS CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN HER PRACTICING THE BLACK ART...

I'VE MANY CASES ON THE DOCKET. THE JURY HAVE HEARD *ACCUSER* AND *ACCUSED* WHAT IS YOUR *VERDICT?*

WE FIND THE WITCH VARNAL... *GUILTY AS ACCUSED!*

WITCH EMILY VARNAL, I CONDEMN YOU TO *DEATH BY FIRE,* AT THE *STAKE!*

YOU'LL BURN IN HELL FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE HERE TODAY!

YOU MURDERED THOSE PEOPLE, LANIER... YOU ROBBED THEIR DEAD BODIES!

AND YOU'LL BURN IN THE SQUARE TODAY, WITCH VARNAL!

I'M SURE NO ONE WILL MIND IF I TAKE THIS BOX AS A *MEMENTO* OF THE TRIAL!

VARNAL WON'T BE HERE LONG ENOUGH TO *PROTEST!*

I KNEW HE'D TAKE THE BAIT...I *JUST KNEW IT!*

THAT NIGHT...

NO, WITCH VARNAL... I CAN'T OPEN THIS BOX YOU LEFT BEHIND! WHAT TREASURES DOES IT HOLD?

I CURSE YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS UNTO THE TENTH GENERATION, EZEKIAL LANIER!

I SWEAR BY SATAN THAT YOU AND THOSE WHO FOLLOW YOU, AND ARE EVIL, WILL LOSE WHAT THEY CHERISH MOST!

LET'S GO TO YOUR PLACE, MY LOVELY... I'LL **SHARE** SOME O' WHAT'S IN THIS BOX .. IF YOU'RE VERY, **VERY** GOOD!

I'LL BE GOOD, ALL RIGHT... I **PROMISE** YOU THAT!

AND SOON...

OH, PUT THAT OLD BOX AWAY, LOVER. YOU CAN OPEN IT **LATER...!**

HOLD ON... I PUSHED THE RIGHT STUDS! SHE'S OPEN!

EEEYAAAAA!

THEN EVIL EZEKIAL LANIER'S **TONGUE** AND **EYES WITHERED,** FOR THEY WERE WHAT HE TREASURED **MOST,** FOR HE WAS GROWING RICH BY **LYING** WITH THAT **TONGUE** ABOUT THINGS HE **SAW** WITH THOSE **EYES,** THEN STEALING THE POSSESSIONS OF THOSE HE **DOOMED...**

THAT WITCH'S CURSE DID WHAT SHE **PROMISED** IT WOULD! YOU'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE **I'M** BLAMED FOR WHAT HAPPENED!

HE WANDERED THE STREETS THAT NIGHT, **BATTERING** HIMSELF AGAINST TREES AND HOUSES, TRIPPING... THEY FOUND HIM IN THE MORNING, UNCONSCIOUS...

HE WAS CLINGING TO THIS BOX, MRS. LANIER!

DOESN'T **ANYONE** KNOW WHAT HAPPENED..?

GREATLY AGITATED, MRS. LANIER NEVER *REMEMBERED* SHOVING THE MYSTERIOUS IRON BOX INTO SOME *DRAWER*, WHERE 'T LAY FORGOTTEN FOR A COUPLE OF GENERATIONS, UNTIL THE DAY ONE *BARNABY* LANIER FOUND THE BOX...

DAMNATION, I SEE NO WAY TO OPEN THIS BLASTED BOX.!

NEVER MIND THAT, LANIER. I DID A JOB FOR YOU.! AMOS WALLER'S SHIP IS A FLAMIN' HULK IN THE HARBOR.!

I PROMISED YOU £30, FORBES, AND £30 *YOU'LL GET!*

FIFTY, LANIER.! DON'T CHEAT ME... YOU'VE *SHIPS* THAT CAN BURN *TOO*, Y'KNOW.!

BURNING OUT A COMPETITOR MEANT EXTRA CARGO, AT *HIGHER RATES*, FOR BARNABY. HE COULD WELL AFFORD THE £50 HE PAID HIS HIRELING.! OH, YES, HE WAS AN *EVIL* MAN..

YOU'VE TAKEN A *BIG CHANCE* SAILING WITHOUT INSURANCE... SO *LOADED DOWN*...

LLOYD'S WOULDN'T INSURE MY SHIPS. FAIR ENOUGH. I'LL MAKE IT TO THE COLONIES... AND I'LL HAVE SAVED THE COST OF INSURANCE.!

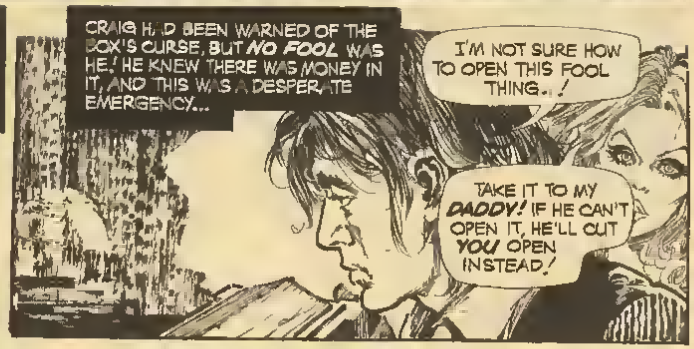
BARNABY *TOYED* WITH THAT METAL BOX HE'D BROUGHT ABOARD SHIP. SOMEHOW, THAT NIGHT, HE TOUCHED THE *RIGHT STUDS*...

OH... MY GOD.! *GAAAAAGH*...

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A *MOUNTAINOUS SWELLING* OF THE SEA, AND THE WIND *SHRIEKED*, RENDING THE SAILS ON ALL THREE OF THE LANIER SHIPS. AND THE ROARING, THUNDERING, VICIOUSLY *POUNDING* MONSTER WAVES SPLINTERED THEM LIKE *MATCHWOODS!*

HOW STRANGE THAT THERE WAS NO LOSS OF LIFE ABOARD THE LANIER SHIPS THAT NIGHT. BUT THEN, WITCH VARNAL'S CURSE APPLIED ONLY TO BARNABY, WHO LOST ALMOST EVERYTHING...
...I'M GLAD YOU THREW THAT HORRIBLE IRON BOX AWAY, BETH. IT'S GOT A CURSE ON IT.!
LET THE FOOL THINK I'VE THROWN IT AWAY. BARNABY'S GONE MAD, AND I'M SURE THERE'S MONEY IN THE BOX!

SO ANOTHER LANIER HAD PAID FOR HIS EVIL. BUT THERE WERE OTHERS. THERE WAS CRAIG LANIER, BACK IN 1872, A YOUNG MAN PROUD OF HIS FINE BODY...
MY DADDY'LL KILL YOU FOR WHAT, YOU DID TO ME, MR. LANIER
NO NEED TO TELL HIM NOW, IS THERE, SYLVIA? I KNOW WHERE THERE'S A LOT OF MONEY IN A BOX! YOU COULD BUY ANYTHING YOU WANT!


CRAIG HAD BEEN WARNED OF THE BOX'S CURSE, BUT NO FOOL WAS HE.! HE KNEW THERE WAS MONEY IN IT, AND THIS WAS A DESPERATE EMERGENCY...
I'M NOT SURE HOW TO OPEN THIS FOOL THING...!
TAKE IT TO MY DADDY! IF HE CAN'T OPEN IT, HE'LL CUT YOU OPEN INSTEAD.!

THERE, THAT DID IT!
OH... NNNO!
YOU 'AVE NO MONEY, 'EY... IS THAT IT?

YAAA!
I'M ALL BLOODY.! I... I'VE BEEN...
HAHAHAHA! MONEY'S NOT THE ONLY THING YOU HAVEN'T GOT NOW...!

CRAIG WAS ONLY ONE MORE OF THE MANY WICKED LANIERS WHO SUFFERED BY THE WITCH'S CURSE. BUT ONE LOSES COUNT.! IS OUR PRESENT DAY LARRY LANIER AMONG THE TEN GENERATIONS CURSED BY VARNAL...?
I SAY, DON'T I KNOW YOU?
RECEP
WHY NOT? I'M CANDICE HADDON, CANDY. THERE, NOW YOU KNOW ME.!

YOU'RE A VERY HANDSOME MAN, LARRY. AND YOU ***KNOW IT,*** DON'T YOU?

MODESTY ISN'T ONE OF MY STRONG POINTS, SWEETHEART. BUT YOU'RE VERY EASY ON THE EYES, TOO!

YOU'RE IN KIND OF A ***HURRY*** THERE, OLD GIRL!

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME HON, AND I DON'T MAKE A PASS AT ***EVERY*** MAN I SEE!

I CAN ONLY CONCENTRATE ON ONE THING AT A TIME. RIGHT ***NOW*** I'VE GOT TO OPEN THIS ***BOX!***

WHAT'S IN IT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO MAKE A ***LADY WAIT?***

A LOT OF MONEY, I ***HOPE,*** YOU ***NYMPH..!***

SUDDENLY THE BOX OPENS, AND ***YES,*** LARRY IS THE ***LAST*** OF THE LANIER LINE UNDER WITCH VARNAL'S CURSE...

LARRY... ***W-WHAT IS IT?***

SOMETHING IS HAPPENING TO LARRY THAT DRIVES STEELY SPIKES OF ***TERROR*** INTO CANDICE HADDON'S MIND AND BODY, THAT MAKES SOUR BILE RISE ***INTO HER THROAT,*** CHOKING OFF A SHRIEK OF DISGUST AND LOATHING...

GONE IS THE FRUSTRATED NYMPHOMANIAC ***GONE*** IS THE IRON BOX THAT HAS POWDERED TO RED RUST, AND ***WITCH VARNAL'S*** EVIL EYE THAT HAS TURNED TO ***DUST!*** THE 300-YEAR-OLD CURSE IS DONE WITH NOW! AND GONE... ***OH, GOOD LORD!...*** IS WHAT LARRY LANIER CHERISED ***MOST...***

EEEYAAAAAAA!!!

GHLLLGH!

AAAGHH.. HELP MEEEEEEE!

EEEEEAAAAGH!!

IT *ENDS!* JUST LIKE IT *ALWAYS* ENDS! JUST LIKE IT *HAS* TO END...

THERE'S *NO HOPE* FOR HIM, DOCTOR!

HE'S *GONE!*

MY GOD!

...AND THEN, LIKE ALWAYS, I *AWAKE!*

MY LIPS ARE *DRY*... THERE IS A BITTER *TASTE* IN MY MOUTH!

LIKE *ALWAYS*, THE *DREAM* HAD BEEN THE *SAME!* I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY TIMES IT HAS PLAYED OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN MY *MIND!*

BUT *THIS TIME* SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT... *MISSING...!*

LIKE *ALWAYS*, I RECALL THE DREAM *VIVIDLY!*

BUT *UNLIKE* ALWAYS, I RECALL *NOTHING* OF *MYSELF!*

WHO AM I?

FOR THAT MATTER, *WHERE* AM I?

WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE? WHY IS IT SO *DARK?*

...SO *COLD...?*

...*LONELY?*

WHAT HAS *HAPPENED* TO ME? WHY CAN'T I *RECALL* ANYTHING?

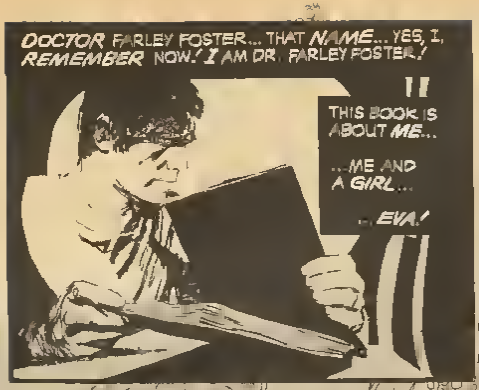
THESE PAPERS... THIS *BOOK*... PERHAPS I CAN *LEARN* SOMETHING FROM *THEM!*

THEY ARE ABOUT A DR. FARLEY FOSTER..

READY TO EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS AND LEARN *MYSTIC SECRETS* THAT HAVE BAFFLED MEN FOR AGES? THEN VENTURE WITH A YOUNG MAN WHO IS ABOUT TO DISCOVER THE ONE *TRUE*...

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN!

STORY AND ART. FERNANDO FERNANDEZ



IT'S ALL COMING BACK! EVA... BEAUTIFUL EVA...

.. HER RICH GOLDEN HAIR... LUSCIOUS SEA-GREEN EYES... WARM THROBBING BODY...

LOOKING FOR LOVE...!

...LOVE THAT I GAVE HER WHEN I TOOK HER FOR MY WIFE!

BUT IT WAS NO GOOD! WRONG FROM THE START! I LOVED HER.. WORSHIPPED HER... DID EVERYTHING SHE ASKED OF ME.. AND MORE!

BUT EVA'S BEAUTY WAS NOT MEANT TO BE HOARDED BY ONE MAN ALONE!

SHE SHARED IT WITH MANY MEN!

WHY, EVA? WHY?

I LOVED YOU!

YOU COULD NEVER SATISFY ME FARLEY! YOU'VE GOT TOO MANY HANGUPS!

YOU'RE INADEQUATE!

YOU'RE ONLY HALF A MAN!

I COULDN'T TAKE ANYMORE! I LASHED OUT AT HER! AGAIN! AGAIN AND AGAIN!

I WAS RAVING... NOT THINKING, ONLY FEELING THE HURT! I COULD HAVE KILLED HER!

BUT I DIDN'T!

I REMEMBER!

I WAS FURIOUS... ON THE VERGE OF MURDER!

BUT I DIDN'T KILL HER!

UGH! I'M CONFUSED AGAIN! I KEEP REMEMBERING A SURGEON. I CAN'T PLACE HIM... BUT HE FITS INTO ALL THIS SOMEHOW!

IS THE SURGEON ... ME?

I AM A DOCTOR OR WAS BEFORE I LOST MY MEMORY!

BUT HOW DID I LOSE MY MEMORY? I STILL DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I AM...

I REMEMBER DRINKING...

...DRINKING A LOT! MORE THAN I SHOULD HAVE!

UGH! THE SURGEON AGAIN! WHY DOES HE KEEP POPPING INTO MY MIND...?

I WAS TRYING TO DROWN OUT ALL THOUGHT OF EVA! I DIDN'T WANT TO THINK OF HER... DIDN'T WANT TO IMAGINE HER ALONE WITH OTHER MEN!

I MUST HAVE GOTTEN PRETTY SOUSED! ...ONLY VAGUELY REMEMBER SHAMBLING OFF...

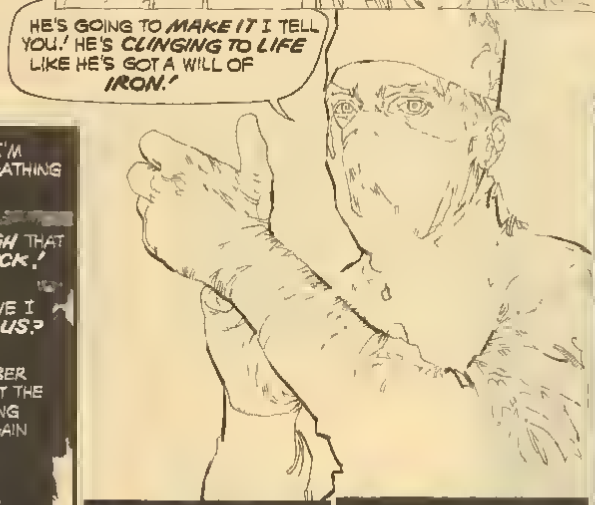
I DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT INTO MY CAR...!
I REMEMBER THE WIND WHIPPING IN THROUGH THE WINDOWS...
I PUSHED THE CAR TO ITS LIMITS... SLAMMING THE STICK INTO FOURTH GEAR... BEATING HELL OUT OF THE ENGINE...! I WAS TAKING OUT MY HATE ON A MACHINE! PUNISHING IT FOR WHAT A WOMAN HAD DONE TO ME...! AND THEN .. THE INEVITABLE...
...I WAS AIRBORNE!
TWISTING. BOUNCING... CRASHING DOWN THE SIDE OF A CLIFF!
MY BODY FELT AS BROKEN AND TORN AS THE CAR'S ..
...AND I REMEMBER.. SLIPPING OFF...
...INTO DEATH!
NO!
THAT CAN'T BE WHAT HAPPENED!
I DIDN'T DIE... BECAUSE I'M HERE... NOW...!
MY BODY WAS CRUSHED... RIPPED APART INSIDE
BUT...
BUT...
..THERE WAS AN OPERATION!
THAT'S RIGHT! THE SURGEON... IT'S THE SURGEON WHO OPERATED ON ME AFTER THE ACCIDENT...
I DIDN'T DIE!
I DIDN'T!!

THEY MUST HAVE LABORED FOR *HOURS*... CONNECTING *SEVERED* ARTERIES .. NERVES, MUSCLES... *BONES!*

THE WAY I WAS *BROKEN UP*, THAT SURGEON HAD TO BE A *MIRACLE MAN* TO PULL ME THROUGH!

NO, HE HAD TO BE A *GOD* TO PULL ME THROUGH..

AND I *KNOW* HE WASN'T *THAT* GOOD!



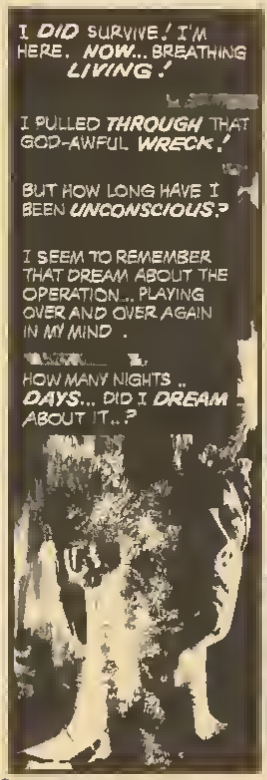
I *DID* SURVIVE! I'M HERE. *NOW*... BREATHING *LIVING!*

I PULLED *THROUGH* THAT GOD-AWFUL *WRECK!*

BUT HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN *UNCONSCIOUS?*

I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT DREAM ABOUT THE OPERATION... PLAYING OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN MY MIND.

HOW MANY NIGHTS .. *DAYS*... DID I *DREAM* ABOUT IT..?



WAIT! THE *OPERATION*... WHERE ARE THE *SCARS* FROM THE OPERATION...?

I... I SEEM TO BE AS GOOD AS *NEW!*

IT'S AS THOUGH THE WHOLE THING *NEVER HAPPENED!*

BUT IT *DID!*

I *KNOW* IT DID!

PLASTIC SURGERY? IS THAT WHY THERE'S *NO* SCARS...?

NO!

I'M A *SURGEON!* I CAN TELL A PLASTIC JOB A MILE OFF!

THIS IS MY *OWN* FLESH, MY *OWN SKIN*..

INTACT!

IT *CAN'T* BE..

UNLESS...

UNLESS..

UNLESS I REALLY *AM* DEAD! THIS PLACE.. THIS DARK, MYSTERIOUS *NOTHING* PLACE . . ' IS *THIS* WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE *DEAD?*

WAIT! THE *BOOK*.. ' THE BOOK THAT TOLD ME OF *EVA*... THE *ACCIDENT!* I *TOUCHED* IT! IT WAS *REAL*... CONCRETE... *SOLID!*

GOD! GOD! I'M SO *CONFUSED!* I DON'T *UNDERSTAND* WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME! I NEED TO *TALK* WITH SOMEONE.. *ANYONE*... BEFORE MY HEAD *EXPLODES!*

I HAVE A THOUSAND *QUESTIONS!*

WHAT HAS *NAPPENED* TO ME?

WHERE AM I?

WHAT IS THIS *PLACE?*

SO *ALONE*...CONFUSED! DID I *DIE* IN THAT *WRECK?*..ON THE *OPERATING TABLE?*

CAN A *BOOK* EXIST IN THE LAND OF THE *DEAD?* *I'M* REAL . *SOLID!* WHY CAN'T A *BOOK* BE SOLID, ALSO? OR WAS THE BOOK A FIGMENT OF MY *IMAGINATION?* A SUBCONSCIOUS *STIMULOUS* TO MAKE ME *REMEMBER!?* LIKE THE PROVERBAL *BOOK OF THE DEAD!*

CAN THIS BE *HEAVEN?*

IS THIS *HELL?*

. A KIND OF *LIMBO*... A NONPLACE FOR LOST, WANDERING SOULS. ?

. OR IS THIS WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE *MAD?*

HEAVEN HELP ME IF I HAVE LOST MY *MIND!*

NO! THIS ISN'T *MADNESS!* THIS IS ALL VERY *REAL!*

I FEEL AS THOUGH I HAVE GONE THROUGH ALL THIS *BEFORE!*

IS THIS *INSTINCT* TELLING ME... *ALL MEN* ENDURE THIS?

YES.. . ' YES, I *UNDERSTAND* NOW! THIS IS AS BASE... AS *NECESSARY*, AS *BIRTH*.. !

AS COMMON PLACE AS *LIFE* ITSELF

THIS IS THE *FINAL RECKONING!!*

IT IS LIFE THAT IS *DARK!* *LIFE* THAT SHOULD BE *FEARED*. . *NOT DEATH!*

I AM *DYING*... NOT *YET* DEAD... BUT *DYING!* AND *THIS* IS WHERE I MAKE *PEACE*...

..NOT WITH MY *CREATOR* OR SOME *SUPREME BEING*...

BUT WITH *MYSELF!*

I UNDERSTAND IT *ALL* NOW...

THOSE *LIGHTS*.. AHEAD OF ME... DRAWING NEARER . *NEARER*...

..IT IS THE *LIGHT* OF *DEATH!*

DEATH IS NOT DARK AND MYSTERIOUS, AS MEN PORTRAY IT...IT AS *LIGHT*.. *BEAUTIFUL*...

ETERNAL BLISS!

AND THIS DARK, COLD PLACE.. THIS PLACE THAT HAS CONFUSED ME... FRIGHTENED ME ..

THIS IS MY OWN MIND!

I MUST ANSWER ONLY TO MYSELF FOR MY LIFE!

IT IS HERE... NOW... WHERE I DECIDE IF MY LIFE HAS BEEN WORTHWHILE!

DID I CREATE A LIVING HELL FOR MYSELF... FOR OTHERS IN MY LIFETIME?

...OR DID I DO MY SMALL PART TO MAKE MY LIFE, AND THE LIVES OF THOSE I TOUCHED WORTHWHILE!

I UNDERSTAND NOW! LIFE IS ONE BIG TEST! IF YOU PASS THE TEST... THIS ONE MOMENT BEFORE DEATH... THIS FINAL SELF-RECKONING, WILL BE EASIER!

IF YOU FAIL THE TEST OF LIFE, THEN I IMAGINE THIS IS THE WORST HELL ANYONE COULD GO THROUGH!

YES! YES, I DID DO MY BEST! MY LIFE HAS BEEN GOOD!

I HAD MY HEARTBREAKS... MY DISAPPOINTMENTS... MY SHORTCOMINGS... LIKE THOSE OF ANY MAN! BUT LIFE HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME! I WILL MISS IT DEARLY!

BUT I LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEW WORLD... THE NEW LIFE I WILL FIND IN DEATH!

POOR EVA! I WONDER HOW SHE WILL FARE IN HER FINAL TEST!

I SINCERELY HOPE IT IS EASY FOR HER.

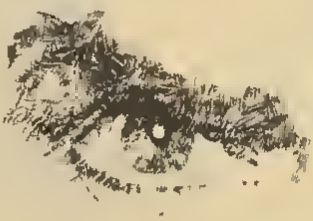
...BUT I CAN GO NOW...!

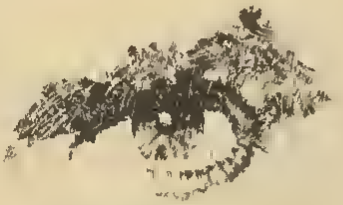
DEATH DRAWS NEAR... AND I CAN LEAVE MY MIND... AND RETURN TO WITHIN MY WHOLE BODY.

... FOR THE FINAL TIME!

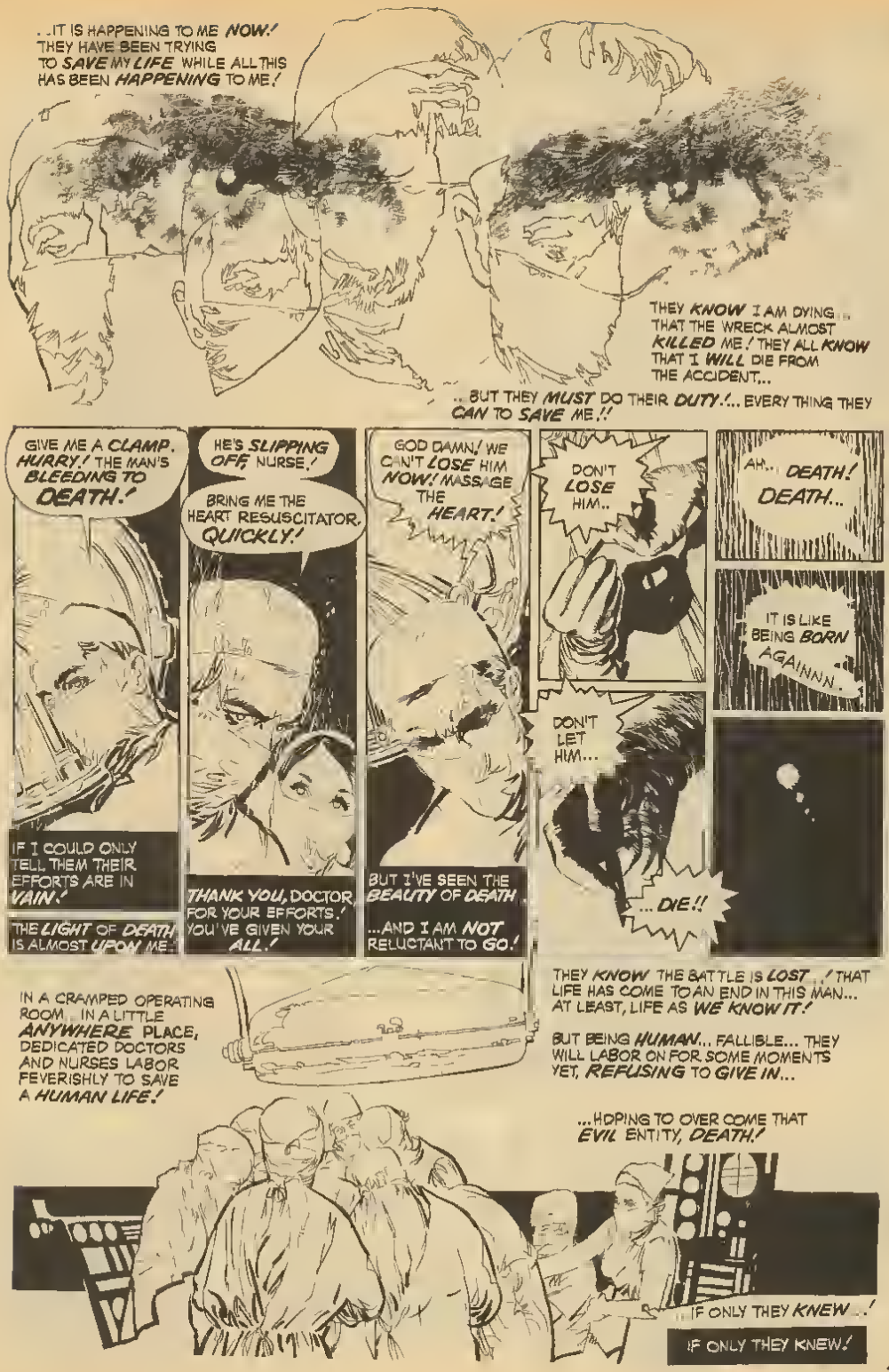
AH... I AM ON A TABLE FROM THE FEEL OF IT... AN OPERATING TABLE!

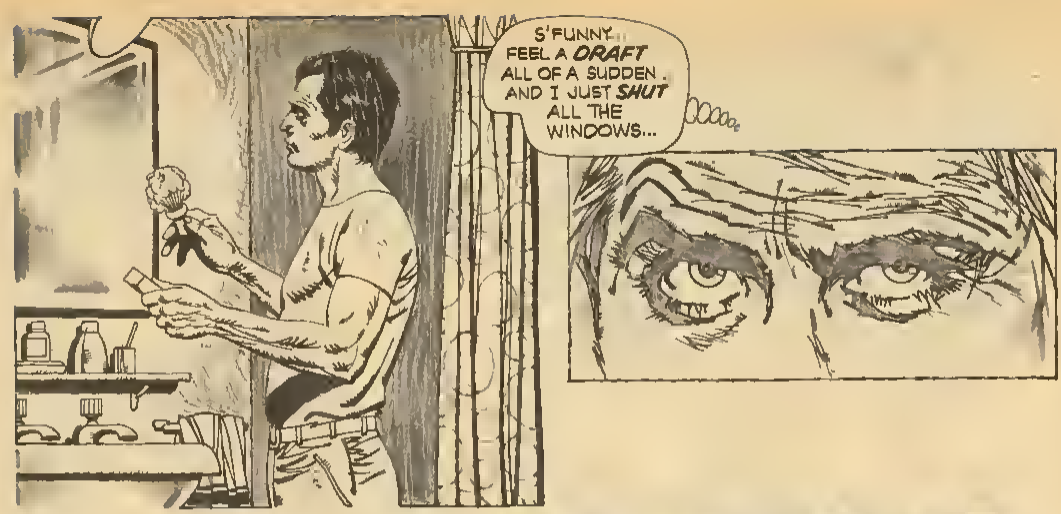
SO THAT EXPLAINS THE DREAM!

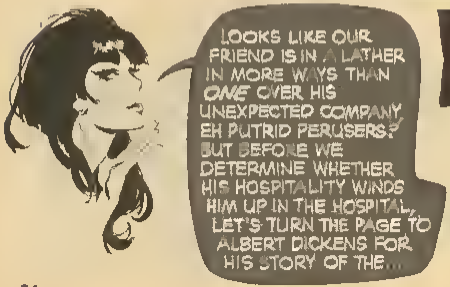




THE DOCTORS... NURSES... OPERATING ROOM! IT WASN'T A DREAM AT ALL...


...IT IS HAPPENING TO ME NOW! THEY HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SAVE MY LIFE WHILE ALL THIS HAS BEEN HAPPENING TO ME!
THEY KNOW I AM DYING... THAT THE WRECK ALMOST KILLED ME! THEY ALL KNOW THAT I WILL DIE FROM THE ACCIDENT...
...BUT THEY MUST DO THEIR DUTY!... EVERY THING THEY CAN TO SAVE ME!!
GIVE ME A CLAMP. HURRY! THE MAN'S BLEEDING TO DEATH!
IF I COULD ONLY TELL THEM THEIR EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN!
THE LIGHT OF DEATH IS ALMOST UPON ME...
HE'S SLIPPING OFF, NURSE!
BRING ME THE HEART RESUSCITATOR. QUICKLY!
THANK YOU, DOCTOR FOR YOUR EFFORTS! YOU'VE GIVEN YOUR ALL!
GOD DAMN! WE CAN'T LOSE HIM NOW! MASSAGE THE HEART!
BUT I'VE SEEN THE BEAUTY OF DEATH
...AND I AM NOT RELUCTANT TO GO!
DON'T LOSE HIM...
DON'T LET HIM...
...DIE!!
AH... DEATH! DEATH...
IT IS LIKE BEING BORN AGAINNN...
IN A CRAMPED OPERATING ROOM... IN A LITTLE ANYWHERE PLACE, DEDICATED DOCTORS AND NURSES LABOR FEVERISHLY TO SAVE A HUMAN LIFE!
THEY KNOW THE BATTLE IS LOST...! THAT LIFE HAS COME TO AN END IN THIS MAN... AT LEAST, LIFE AS WE KNOW IT!
BUT BEING HUMAN... FALLIBLE... THEY WILL LABOR ON FOR SOME MOMENTS YET, REFUSING TO GIVE IN...
...HOPING TO OVER COME THAT EVIL ENTITY, DEATH!
...IF ONLY THEY KNEW...!
IF ONLY THEY KNEW!





LAST LUNCH FOR RATS!

STORY: DOUG MOENCH / ART: AURALEON

I FAIL TO SEE WHAT HAROLD PAPPIN HAS TO DO WITH THIS MATTER, ALBERT, AND FURTHERMORE...
ANY MORE FURTHERMORES AND YOU'LL NEVER SEE WHAT POOR HAROLD PAPPIN HAS TO DO WITH IT.
JUST SLOW DOWN AND LET ME TELL YOU...FROM THE BEGINNING...
"TWENTY YEARS AGO THERE WERE SIX OF US, ALWAYS TOGETHER, BUT POOR HAROLD PAPPIN WAS THE ODD ONE OUT...AND SUFFERED FOR IT..."
GO ON HOME TO YOUR PET RATS, HAROLD... THEY'RE JUST YOUR SIZE. YOU'RE TOO SHRIMPY TO PLAY WITH US GUYS!
"THEY ALL PICKED ON HAROLD, BUT MAX ROBBINS WAS THE BIGGEST BULLY. MAYBE I JUST FELT SORRY FOR HAROLD, BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT FOR HIM TO COLLECT LUMPS MERELY BECAUSE HE WAS BORN SMALLER THAN THE REST OF US..."
LEAVE 'IM ALONE, MAX... GO PICK ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE FOR A CHANGE!
LAY OFF, YOU GOODY-TWO-SHOES! YOU CAN'T BE HIS GUARDIAN ANGEL FOREVER!
"MAX ROBBINS WAS RIGHT, IT TURNED OUT. I'D BEEN HELPING MY MOTHER WITH THE TOMATO CANNING ONE DAY AND WHEN I WAS DONE I WENT OVER TO CALL HAROLD. HE WAS IN THE YARD, CRYING HIS GUTS OUT..."
HEY, HAROLD... WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU LOST YOUR BEST...
I DID, ALBERT! I JUST LOST EVERY LAST ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS...
...MY ONLY FRIENDS...NEXT TO YOU, ALBERT... THEY'RE DEAD, ALL OF 'EM! AND I KNOW WHO DID IT...!
YOU MEAN MAX ROBBINS AND THE OTHER GUYS...?
WHO ELSE, ALBERT... WHO ELSE WOULD POISON MY PET RATS?!
HIS RATS WERE STIFF OUTSTRETCHED, THEIR FIVE LITTLE FEET STICKING STRAIGHT UP. A FEW FLIES BEGAN BUZZING AROUND...HAROLD JUST COULDN'T BRUSH 'EM OFF..."

" I CAN *STILL* REMEMBER HIS FACE NOW, TWENTY YEARS LATER, ALL TWISTED IN HURT AND PAIN AND MOST OF ALL *RAGE*... "

BUT THEY'LL *PAY*, ALBERT... OH, HOW THEY'LL PAY! I'LL *KILL* THEM, ALBERT, I'LL *POISOH* THEM...

JUST LIKE THEY *POISONED* ME WITH THEIR *HATE*, AND MY *RATS*... WITH *DEATH*.

JUST YOU *WAIT* AND *SEE*!

" I TOLD HAROLD THAT HE WAS JUST *SPOUTIN' WORDS*, THAT HE SHOULD *FORGET* ABOUT IT... AND ABOUT TWO WEEKS LATER AS WE CROSSED THE MEADOW TO GRAZER'S POND IT SEEMED HE HAD... "

SURE IS A GOOD DAY FOR SWIMMIN', EH HAROLD?

GOOD DAY FOR *ANYTHING*, ALBERT... NO SCHOOL FOR THREE WHOLE *MONTHS*!

" BUT I COULD *FEEL* THE FINE DAY *SOURING* FOR HAROLD AS WE TOPPED *WIDOW'S PEAK* AND SAW THAT MAX AND THE OTHER [illegible] TO THE SWIMMING HOLE... "

STILL WANT TO GO *SWIMMIN'*, HAROLD? WE CAN ALWAYS GO BACK AND GET OUR *KITES*...

AIN'T NO *WIND*, ALBERT. BESIDES, WE CAME HERE TO *SWIM*, DIDN'T WE?

SO LET'S GET IN THE *WATER*.

" I GUESS EVEN I HAD SOME OF MAX'S FEELINGS IN ME, BECAUSE IT JUST DIDN'T SEEM POSSIBLE THAT HAROLD'S LITTLE BODY COULD HOLD THAT MUCH *GUTS*, GOING STRAIGHT DOWN THERE INTO WHAT WAS SURE TO BE *TROUBLE* AS WELL AS WATER! AND SOMEHOW, I WAS *PROUD* OF HIM... "

" AND THE TROUBLE CAME BEFORE THE WATER... "

WELL, IF IT ISN'T *ALBERT* AND *RUNTY HAROLD*! HEY, ALBERT... WHERE YOU BEEN *KEEPIN'* LITTLE HAROLD? IN YOUR *POCKET*?

HEY, *PUNY HAROLD*!

YA SURE THOSE *ARMS* OF YOURS ARE *LONG* ENOUGH TO *SWIM* WITH, HAROLD?

" HAROLD PRETENDED NOT TO HEAR THE *CRUEL JIBES* AND *TAUNTS* HURLED AT HIM AS HE JUMPED INTO THE POND... "

LOOK AT *THAT*, GUYS .. HAROLD MAKES ABOUT AS BIG A SPLASH AS A *MOSQUITO*!

SPLOOOSH!

" THERE WAS SOMETHING IN MAX ROBBINS WHICH SAID HE JUST *COULDN'T* LEAVE POOR HAROLD ALONE. RIGHT OFF, HE STARTED BY *DUNKING* HIM UNDER THE MURKY WATER... "

WHATCHA *STRUGGLIN'* FOR, HAROLD? YOU WANTED TO GO *SWIMMIN'!* DIDN'T YA?

YEAH, HAROLD... EVERYONE *KNOWS* YOU GOTTA GET IN THE *WATER* TO *SWIM!*

" ONCE AGAIN, I HAD TO STOP MAX ... "

KNOCK IT OFF, MAX! YOU'RE NOT BEING *FUNNY* ANYMORE.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! YOU *SURE* YOU AIN'T HAROLD'S *BIG BROTHER*, ALBERT?

KAF KAF A-HUCK!

" THE WHOLE THING W. S MAX'S IDE , OF COURSE, AND EVERYONE WENT ALONG WITH IT, AS KIDS'LL DO... "

ALL RIGHT, YOU GUYS, LET'S HAVE A *CONTEST!* WE'LL SEE WHO CAN STAY UNDER WATER THE *LONGEST.*

IT'S A CINCH *HAROLD* WON'T WIN... *HIS* LUNGS AIN'T BIG ENOUGH TO HOLD HIS BREATH FOR *TEN SECONDS!*

" MAX *GOADED* HAROLD ON... UNTIL THERE WAS *NOTHING* HAROLD COULD DO BUT PARTICIPATE IN THE CONTEST .. "

YOU'RE NOT *SCARED*, ARE YOU, HAROLD? YOU'RE NOT *CHICKEN...?*

SHUT UP AND START YOUR *STUPID CONTEST*, MAX ROBBINS!

" MAX COUNTED TO THREE AND WE ALL *SUBMERGED*, HOLDING OUR BREATHS UNTIL OUR CHESTS SQUEEZED PAIN AND WE SAW RED IN OUR MINDS... "

" THEN OUR HEADS BOBBED TO THE SURFACE LIKE A CLUSTER OF COCOANUTS, GASPING AND WHEEZING FOR AIR... "

"...ALL OF US *EXCEPT* ONE... *HAROLD PAPPIN...*"

HEY..! *HAROLD'S* STILL DOWN THERE.' NEVER THOUGHT *HE* COULD HOLD HIS BREATH LONGER THAN THE *REST* OF US.'

"BUT AFTER FOUR OR FIVE MINUTES MAX'S RELUCTANT RESPECT FOR HAROLD TURNED INTO A QUIET, CREEPING FEAR..."

HEY, HAROLD, YOU CAN COME *UP* NOW.' YOU CAN COME UP NOW, HAROLD.' YOU *WON* THE CONTEST.'

"IN A *PANIC,* WE BEGAN DIVING FOR HAROLD..."

"...BUT WE NEVER *DID* FIND HIM..."

"AND SO WE CRAWLED ONTO SHORE... AND MAX SOLEMNLY RECITED OUR COLLECTIVE PACT.."

AND WE *ALL* SWEAR NEVER TO TELL A WORD ABOUT THIS TO *ANYONE!* IF ONE OF US *DOES,* THE *REST* OF US GET TO BEAT HIM TILL HE'S *BLOODY...'*

"...A PACT I *IMMEDIATELY DISLIKED...*"

"...A PACT I ADHERED TO ONLY TEMPORARILY, WHEN THE PHONE RANG LATER THAT DAY..."

NO, MRS. PAPPIN, I HAVEN'T SEE HAROLD!

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HAROLD ALL DAY? YOU SEE HIM *EVERY* DAY, ALBERT DICKENS... AND YOU *CALL* HIM EVERY DAY AT THIS *TIME!*

NOW, THE *ONE DAY* HAROLD'S MISSING AND YOU *DON'T* CALL HIM!...' SOMETHING'S MIGHTY *FISHY,* ALBERT DICKENS.'

"...AND A PACT I EVENTUALLY *BROKE* UNDER THE FIRST OUNCE OF *PRESSURE*..."

IT WAS *AWFUL*, MRS. PAPPIN! HAROLD *WON* THE CONTEST! WE WAS DOWN BY *GRAZER'S POND* AND..

...AND WE HAD A *CONTEST* TO SEE WHO COULD STAY UNDER WATER THE LONGEST AND HAROLD'S *STILL* DOWN THERE...!

"THEY *DRAGGED* GRAZER'S POND ALL DAY FOR HAROLD'S BODY.."

"...BUT THEY *NEVER FOUND* HAROLD, EITHER..."

YES, I'M WELL *AWARE* OF THE STORY OF HAROLD PAPPIN, ALBERT... BUT I *STILL* DON'T SEE WHAT THAT HAS TO DO WITH...

"AS YOU KNOW, THE *REST* OF US... MAX, ME, RALPH FOULKES, HERB KNOWLES, AND GENE FARBER... WENT THROUGH *SCHOOL* TOGETHER AND UPON GRADUATION POOLED OUR *KNOWLEDGE* AND *FUNDS* TO OPEN A JOINT BUSINESS... THE *APEX CHEMICAL CORPORATION* OVER ON MAIN STREET..."

I'M *GETTING* TO THAT, JUST LET ME GO ON WITH WHAT I'VE GOT TO *SAY*...

"THAT BRINGS US UP TO LAST WEEK.. *I* WAS IN THE STOCKROOM UNLOADING A SHIPMENT OF POTASSIUM CYANIDE WHEN *HERB KNOWLES* RUSHED IN WITH THE NEWS..."

ALBERT...! IT'S *GENE...!* I WENT TO PICK HIM UP AND HE WAS... *LORD, ALBERT,* YOU'D *BETTER* COME LOOK FOR *YOURSELF!*

"WE *RUSHED* OVER TO GENE FARBER'S PLACE AND *FOUND* HIM THE WAY HE WAS, *HUNG* BY HIS FEET FROM THE CEILING, WITH HIS *HEAD* IN THE BATHROOM SINK... *DROWNED*..."

"I GUESS IT WAS THE FACT THAT GENE HAD *DROWNED* WHICH *REMINDED* ME OF POOR HAROLD AND HOW I USED TO VISIT THE POND EVERY DAY FOLLOWING HIS DEATH..."

COME ON UP, HAROLD! YOU CAN COME UP NOW, HAROLD!

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT DEAD...!

"RALPH FOULKES AND I FOUND *HERB* TWO DAYS LATER, *LYING* ON THE BOTTOM OF HIS POOL. THE LARGE *ROCK* ON HIS CHEST RULED OUT SUICIDE... AS HAD THE FACT THAT GENE FARBER'S *FEET* HAD BEEN TIED TO THE *CEILING*. BESIDES, *BOTH* MEN HAD BEEN OWNERS OF APEX CHEMCO... IT WAS A *PATTERN*..."

"AND THE PATTERN ENCOMPASSED *MORE* THAN THAT... IT EXTENDED BACK TO OUR *CHILDHOOD*, AND THE *DEATH OF FOUR PET WHITE RATS*..."

THEY'LL *PAY*, ALBERT... I'LL *KILL* THEM... JUST LIKE THEY *KILLED* MY *RATS!*

"RALPH'S DEATH YESTERDAY *CINCHED* IT, DON'T YOU *SEE?!*" HE WAS *STRANGLED* WITH A TOWEL AND *DROWNED* IN HIS BATHTUB... *DROWNED* LIKE THE *OTHER TWO!* *DROWNED* LIKE *HAROLD PAPPIN*... WHO HAD VOWED TO KILL *ALL THREE* OF THEM... AND *MAX*, TOO!"

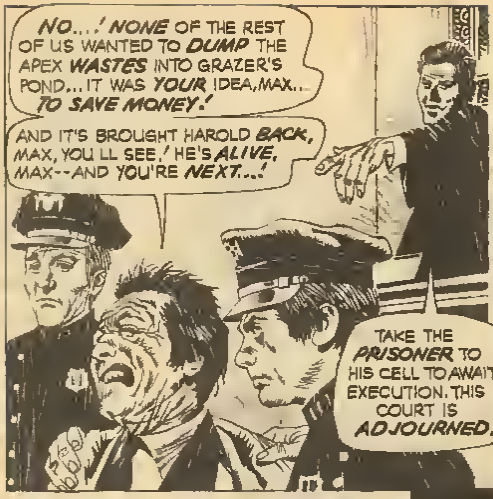
"IT ALL *FITS!*" THE WAY HAROLD HAD *PROMISED* TO KILL THEM... AND THE WAY I KEPT YELLING FOR HAROLD TO COME UP..."

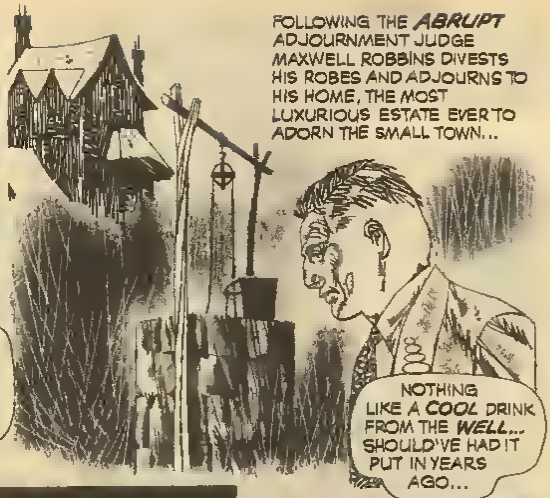
I'LL *KILL* THEM... JUST LIKE THEY *KILLED* MY RATS!

COME UP NOW, HAROLD! YOU CAN COME UP NOW!

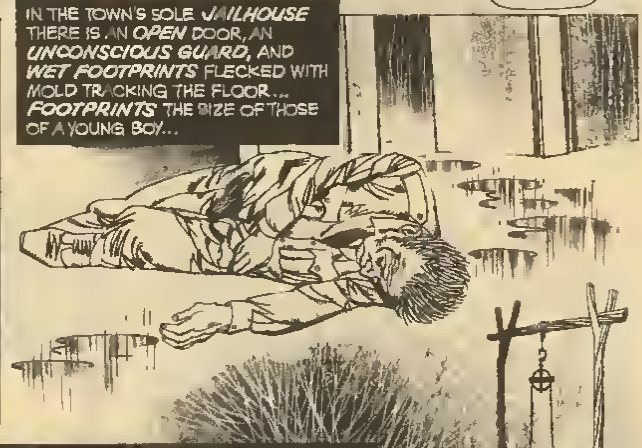
"IT ALL MUST HAVE WORKED TO BRING HAROLD UP FROM HIS *WATERY GRAVE!* HIS *SUPERNATURAL DETERMINATION*... HIS *LUST* FOR *REVENGE*... AND MY *PERSISTENT URGINGS*... MUST HAVE *PULLED* HIM FROM THE WATER..."

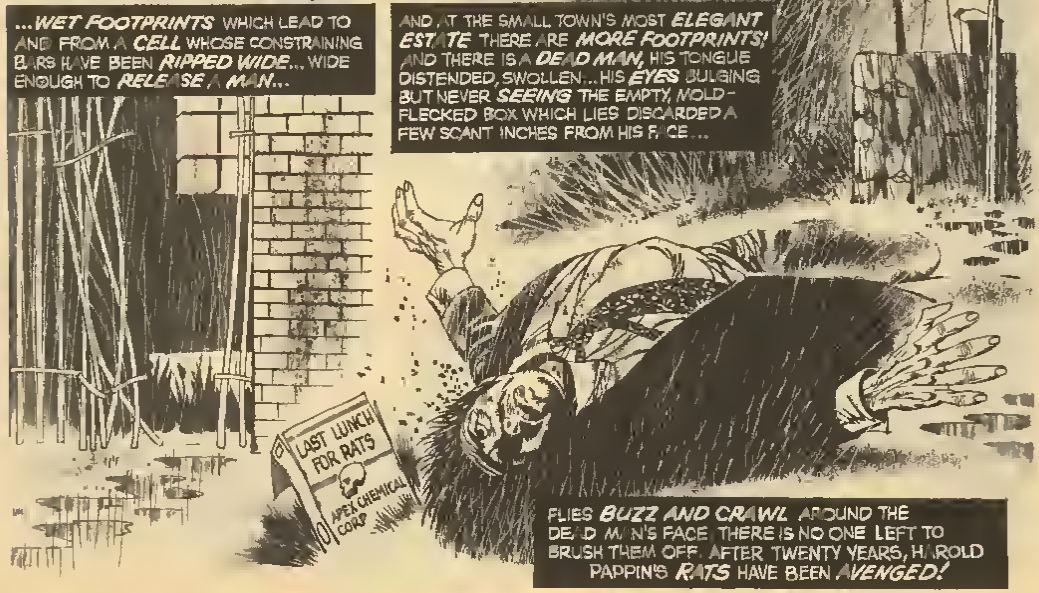
"...AND FORCED HIM INTO TOWN TO EXACT REVENGE ON R. LPH AND THE OTHERS..."
ACCHKKKK--! N-NO! LORD, NOOOOOOOO--!
ARE YOU QUITE FINISHED, ALBERT?
NO! WHAT ABOUT THE CHEMICAL WASTES WE DUMP INTO GRAZER'S POND..? COULDN'T THEY SOMEHOW BRING HAROLD'S CORPSE TO LIFE!
AND ONE THING MORE... THERE WERE FOOTPRINTS AT THE SCENE OF EACH MURDER... WET FOOTPRINTS, WITH FLECKS OF MOLD CLINGING TO THEM ..
THE SIZE OF A YOUNG BOY'S FOOTPRINTS!
THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER QUESTIONS, YOUR HONOR.
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE DEFENDENT ALBERT DICKENS IS GUILTY ON THREE COUNTS OF FIRST-DEGREE MURDER .
.. MURDER COMMITTED WITH THE HOPES OF ACQUIRING FULL OWNERSHIP OF APEX CHEMCO FROM HIS SLAIN CO-OWNERS...
FURTHERMORE, I THINK THE COURT WILL ALSO RECOGNIZE THE DEFENDENT'S WILDLY CONTRIVED STORY OF A WALKING CORPSE TO BE A FLAGRANT LIE DESIGNED TO PROCURE A RULING OF INSANITY...
NO.!!! IT ALL FITS... IT MUST BE WHAT HAPPENED!
NO!
MAX, YOU'RE NEXT! YOU CAN'T DO THIS, MAX! IT'S A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE! YOU'VE KNOWN ME ALL YOUR LIFE, MAX!
YES, I'VE KNOWN YOU, ALBERT, AND IT GRIEVES ME TO PASS THIS SENTENCE UPON YOU.
BUT THE EVIDENCE LEAVES ME NO ALTERNATIVE. I SENTENCE YOU TO DEATH... IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR.
NO..! IT'S NOT FAIR! YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT, MAX! YOU OWN PART OF APEX... YOU'D HAVE THE SAME MOTIVES!
ALBERT, I DO NOT ALLOW MY PRIVATE BUSINESS HOLDINGS... SUCH AS MY ASSOCIATION WITH APEX CHEMICALS ..TO AFFECT MY JUDICIAL RULINGS...


NO...! NONE OF THE REST OF US WANTED TO DUMP THE APEX WASTES INTO GRAZER'S POND... IT WAS YOUR IDEA, MAX... TO SAVE MONEY!
AND IT'S BROUGHT HAROLD BACK, MAX, YOU'LL SEE! HE'S ALIVE, MAX--AND YOU'RE NEXT...!
TAKE THE PRISONER TO HIS CELL TO AWAIT EXECUTION. THIS COURT IS ADJOURNED.


FOLLOWING THE ABRUPT ADJOURNMENT JUDGE MAXWELL ROBBINS DIVESTS HIS ROBES AND ADJOURNS TO HIS HOME, THE MOST LUXURIOUS ESTATE EVER TO ADORN THE SMALL TOWN...
NOTHING LIKE A COOL DRINK FROM THE WELL... SHOULD'VE HAD IT PUT IN YEARS AGO...

HMPH...! DOESN'T TASTE AS GOOO AS USUAL...


IN THE TOWN'S SOLE JAILHOUSE THERE IS AN OPEN DOOR, AN UNCONSCIOUS GUARD, AND WET FOOTPRINTS FLECKED WITH MOLD TRACKING THE FLOOR... FOOTPRINTS THE SIZE OF THOSE OF A YOUNG BOY...


...WET FOOTPRINTS WHICH LEAD TO AND FROM A CELL WHOSE CONSTRAINING BARS HAVE BEEN RIPPED WIDE... WIDE ENOUGH TO RELEASE A MAN...
AND AT THE SMALL TOWN'S MOST ELEGANT ESTATE THERE ARE MORE FOOTPRINTS! AND THERE IS A DEAD MAN, HIS TONGUE DISTENDED, SWOLLEN... HIS EYES BULGING BUT NEVER SEEING THE EMPTY, MOLD-FLECKED BOX WHICH LIES DISCARDED A FEW SCANT INCHES FROM HIS FACE...
LAST LUNCH FOR RATS
APEX CHEMICAL CORP
FLIES BUZZ AND CRAWL AROUND THE DEAD MAN'S FACE. THERE IS NO ONE LEFT TO BRUSH THEM OFF. AFTER TWENTY YEARS, HAROLD PAPPIN'S RATS HAVE BEEN AVENGED!

TIME WORKS *CHANGES*...IT TAKES THE LIGHT OF DAY AND SNUFFS IT WITH THE DARK OF NIGHT. IT LISTENS TO THE CLAMOROUS SOUNDS OF PITCHED BATTLE AND BLANKETS THEM IN OPPRESSIVE *SILENCE*...

...AND IT SEIZES *LIFE*, MOLDS AND DIRECTS IT, AND GRINDS IT INTO *DEATH*...

EVEN WHEN TIME *FAILS* TO WORK ITS MOST CRUEL CHANGE OF LIFE TO DEATH, IT NEVERTHELESS *CHANGES* THAT OVERLOOKED LIFE...

CASE IN POINT... THE LIFE OF A SMALL *DRUMMER BOY* WHO HAS DESCENDED FROM THE HEIGHTS OF INTOXICATING *BATTLE-LUST* TO THE DEPTHS OF FERVENT SORROW AND *REMORSE*...

...AND OF LOSS, AND *LONELINESS*...

STORY: DOUG MOENCH / ART: MUNES

MOVING WITH RAPID, *FLUID* GRACE, THE ANIMATED CORPSE GLIDES FROM THE STILL-WARM BODY OF *ONE* CASUALTY...

HOW CAN HE MOVE SO *FAST*? MUST'VE AT *LEAST* BEEN *WOUNDED*...

...TO *ANOTHER*. PAUSING AT EACH ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO DRAIN STILLED *CONGEALED BLOOD* FROM DEAD VEINS...

...AND *HALTING* HIS SWIFT, METHODICAL VISITATIONS ONLY WHEN HIS UNHOLY *THIRST* HAS BEEN *SLAKED*...

...HALTING, AND *RISING* FROM THE LAST VICTIM OF TWIN RAVAGES: *WAR*, AND THE PREYING KISS OF THE *VAMPIRE*.

BY THE *SAINTS*...HE... HE'S BEEN *DRINKING THEIR BLOOD*...!

SATIATED...HIS ATAVISTIC BLOODLUST SHOCKINGLY *APPEASED*...THE DEPRAVED PARASITE *GLIDES* FROM THE BATTLEFIELD, MELTING INTO THE ENFOLDING WOODS.

HOW...HOW DOES HE MOVE SO *FAST*... AS IF HIS FEET BARELY TREAD THE *EARTH*...?!

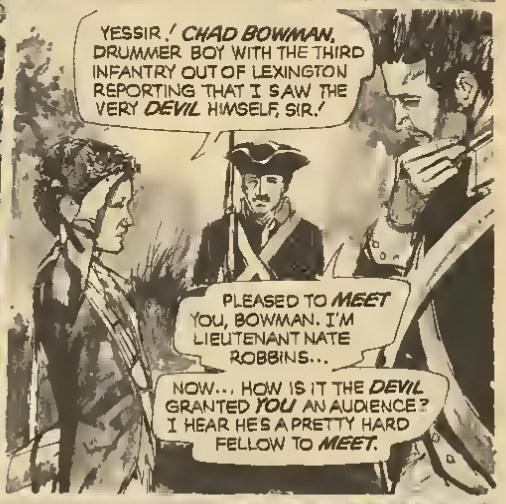
THE YOUNG DRUMMER BOY UNDERSTANDS *LITTLE* OF UNFAIR TAXATION, OF COLONIES AND EMPIRES, OUTRAGED *KINGS* AND VOLUNTARILY EXILED *SUBJECTS*, OF TEA CAST INTO HARBORS OR *REBELLION* IN THE CAUSE OF *FREEDOM*...

...BUT HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE EFFECT OF FEAR...
... AND WHAT HE HAS SEEN THIS BLOODIED NIGHT WOULD INSPIRE FEAR WITHIN THE BREAST OF ONE THRICE HIS TENDER AGE...
...FRANTICALLY, IN A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO PUMMEL FEAR INTO THE GROUND WITH STAMPING, DRIVING FEET...
HE RUNS...HIS MIND SHREDDED WITH A THOUSAND RED THOUGHTS. HIS DRUM CLUTCHED IN FORGOTTEN FINGERS, INSTINCTIVELY...
HE RUNS...HALF THE NIGHT... A NIGHT OF RUNNING, A NIGHT OF FEAR WHICH CLAIMS THE INEVITABLE TOLL OF HIS STRENGTH ..AND HE STAGGERS FROM THE WOODS INTO A CLEARING..
BUKT!

HE'S ALIVE.

HERE YOU GO, LAD... ON YOUR FEET
HAD A ROUGH TIME, HAVE YOU?
THE DEVIL, SIR...THE DEVIL I SAW!

I IMAGINE YOU'LL BE WANTING THIS, SON..
THANK YOU, SIR... IT'S THE ONLY THING I'VE GOT NOW...
...NOW THAT THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
THE DEVIL YOU SAY, BOY?


YESSIR! CHAD BOWMAN, DRUMMER BOY WITH THE THIRD INFANTRY OUT OF LEXINGTON REPORTING THAT I SAW THE VERY DEVIL HIMSELF, SIR!
PLEASED TO MEET YOU, BOWMAN. I'M LIEUTENANT NATE ROBBINS...
NOW... HOW IS IT THE DEVIL GRANTED YOU AN AUDIENCE? I HEAR HE'S A PRETTY HARD FELLOW TO MEET.

...AND THEN HE FLOATED... BUT REAL FAST... INTO THE FOREST. AND THAT'S WHEN I RAN.

INTERESTING STORY, BOWMAN..
YOU EVER HEAR OF HALLUCINATIONS?..THE NIGHT. A LOBSTER-BACK'S RED UNIFORM LOOKING LIKE THE DEVIL HIMSELF.. YOUR EYES PLAYING TRICKS ON YOUR TIRED MIND?

NO .. I SAW IT... SIR. I SAW A DEAD REDCOAT GET UP AND SUCK THE SOULS FROM OTHER SOLDIERS .. AND HE DIDN'T CARE WHETHER THEY WERE AMERICAN OR BRITISH!

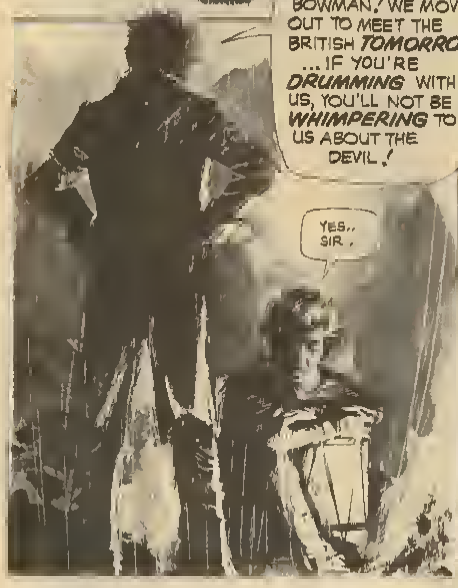
ONLY A MAN WHO'S HAD THE DEVIL POSSESS HIM WOULD DO THAT!

YOUR IMAGINATION SAW THAT .. WHAT YOU REALLY SAW WAS A WOUNDED REDCOAT LOOTING CADAVERS!

NOW LISTEN, LAD... WE'VE NEED OF A GOOD DRUMMER BOY, NOT A BABY WHO HAS NIGHTMARES WHILE HE'S AWAKE.

IT WASN'T A NIGHTM...

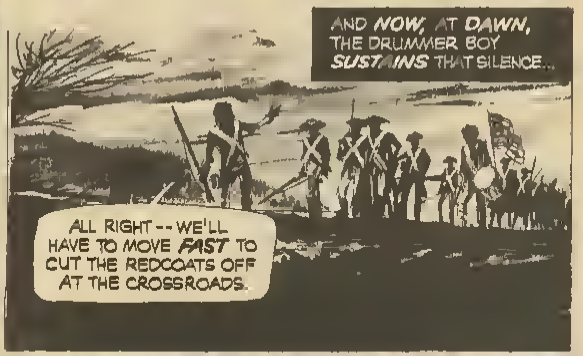
THROUGHOUT THE LONG SLEEPLESS NIGHT CHAD BOWMAN RESPECTED LIEUTENANT ROBBIN'S ORDERS, REMAINING SILENT ABOUT HIS NEAR-ENCOUNTER WITH THE VAMPIRE ..



THAT'S ENOUGH, BOWMAN! WE MOVE OUT TO MEET THE BRITISH TOMORROW ...IF YOU'RE DRUMMING WITH US, YOU'LL NOT BE WHIMPERING TO US ABOUT THE DEVIL!

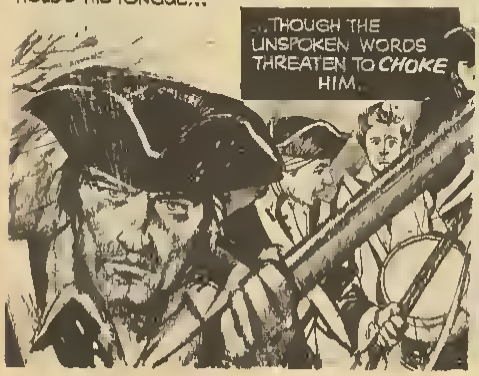
YES.. SIR.

THROUGHOUT THE TEDIOUS DAY'S TREK STILL HE HOLDS HIS TONGUE...



AND NOW, AT DAWN, THE DRUMMER BOY SUSTAINS THAT SILENCE...

ALL RIGHT -- WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE FAST TO CUT THE REDCOATS OFF AT THE CROSSROADS.



...THOUGH THE UNSPOKEN WORDS THREATEN TO CHOKE HIM...

AND DURING THE WAIT, THE INTERMINABLE PERIOD SPENT ON A HILL WAITING FOR THE SUN TO BURNISH POLISHED BRASS IN THE DISTANCE... FOR SCARLET UNIFORMS ON THE MARCH... HE REMAINS SILENT...

ALL RIGHT, HERE THEY ARE. LET'S SHOW THE KING'S MEN HOW FREE MEN FIGHT!

EVEN DURING THE *BATTLE* HE REMAINS SILENT - BUT THOUGH HE DRUMS HIS *BEST*, HIS MIND IS *NOT* ON BOOSTING THE CONTINENTAL TROOPS' MORALE WITH HIS STACCATO SNARE...

DISTRACTEDLY, HE EXPERIENCES THE BATTLE, SCARCELY *NOTICING* THE BRITISH COMPANY'S RIGID MILITARY FORMATION...OR THE LACK OF *ANY* FORMATION AMONG HIS *OWN* MEN...

BLAM

BLAM

BA-LAM

BRIEFLY, *FUTILELY*, HE ATTEMPTS TO *CONFINE* HIS THOUGHTS...TO CHANNEL HIS ENTIRE *CONSCIOUSNESS* ...INTO THE STIRRING TATTOO OF HIS *DRUM*

...BUT *ALWAYS*, HIS THOUGHTS *BULLET* BACK TO *DEVIL* ON A DARKENED *BATTLEFIELD*... AND TO THE LIEUTENANT'S IMPOSED *SILENCE*...

THROUGH THE *MASSACRE*...THROUGH THE INCREDIBLY BRIEF TIME REQUIRED TO *ERASE* THE EXISTENCE OF OVER *SIXTY MEN* WITH ACRIDLY FUMING MUSKET AND RIFLE...HE *CONTINUES* TO HONOR THE COMMAND TO *SILENCE*...

HE HONORS THE COMMAND SILENCE THROUGH THE *LAST STAGES* OF THE TRAGIC BATTLE...THROUGH THE SMOTHERING *QUIET* OF HIS HALTED DRUM, BROKEN ONLY BY INTERMITTENT MUSKET SHOTS..

IT'S *USELESS* .. WE'RE *WIPED OUT!* RETREAT TO THE *WOODS!*

BUT WHEN HE HEARS THE LIEUTENANT'S STRIDENT CALL FOR *RETREAT*...

...HE *BREAKS* THE COMMAND TO SILENCE

...AND *BELLOWS!*

NOOOO! NOT INTO THE *WOODS!*

THAT'S WHERE I SAW THE *DEVIL*...!

HE *BELLOWS* HIS PROTEST... EVEN AS THE LIEUTENANT'S STRONG, ADAMANT ARMS *SCOOP* HIM OFF THE BLOODY PLAIN OF DEATH...

NO..NOOOOO!

...AND *CARRY* HIM IN A FRANTIC RETREAT *PIERCING* THE DENSE FOREST...

BLAM BAM BA-LAM

NOT THE *WOOOOOOOSSS*...!!

SHUT *UP*, BOY!

...AND *PENETRATING* DEEPLY INTO THE THICKLY-SET TREES AND FOLIAGE...

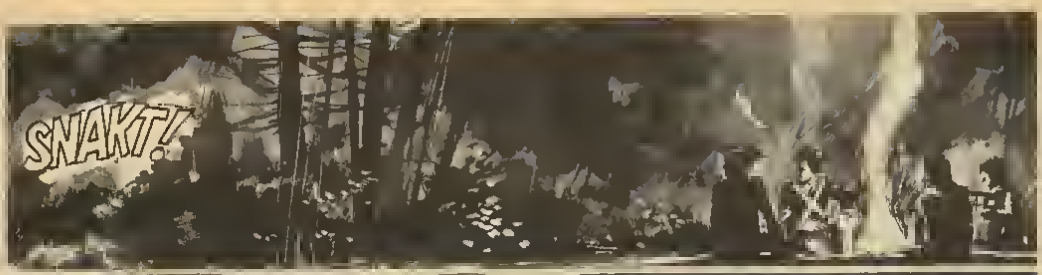
BETTER TO *DIE* BY THE *BRITISH* THAN THE *DEVIL*...!

...A RETREAT WHICH *TERMINATES* ONLY IN THE SAFETY OF *DISTANCE*..

WE *HAD* TO RETREAT, BOY, AND *DEVIL* OR *NO*... A RETREAT ISN'T MADE BY CHARGING *INTO* THE ENEMY'S FIRE...

NOW STOP YOUR *SNIVELING* ABOUT THE BLOODY *DEVIL!*

...AND *DARKNESS*...



NOW, AS THE TWO INFANTRYMEN SLIP INTO THE TANGLED GANGLION OF SHRUBBERY, THE DRUMMER BOY FINDS THAT SILENCE IS THE ONLY ACTION HIS TAUNTENED NERVES CAN BEAR...

AND THE FEAR WHICH GRIPS HIM IS NOT FOR THE MEN'S LIVES... BUT FOR THEIR SOULS...

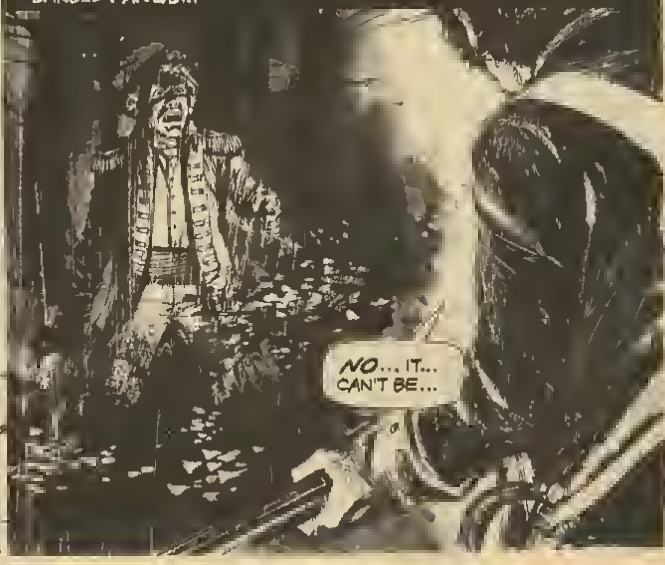
...A FEAR WHOSE BASIS IS AGONIZINGLY ROOTED IN THE DEMENTED CACOPHONY OF TWIN SHRIEKS...

YAAAAAHHHHHAH! AAAAIIIEEEEE!

...AND A FEAR WHICH IS INTENSIFIED BY THE SOUNDS WHICH FOLLOW... SOFT SOUNDS ECHOED IN HELL...

... SUCKING SOUNDS...

THEN THE VIOLENT ERUPTION THROUGH EXPLODING LEAVES... A HURTLING FORM IN BRITISH UNIFORM, EYES FERALLY GLEAMING, MOUTH CONTORTED IN A BLOODY SNARL SPROUTING WICKEDLY BARBED FANGS...



...A FORM WHICH *BURSTS* INTO THE CAMPSITE CLEARING, AND ADVANCES ON LIEUTENANT NATE ROBBINS...

...*RELENTLESSLY*, IMPERVIOUS TO THE STARK CRACK OF A FRENZIEDLY DISCHARGED *MUSKET*...

KRAK!

SHOT... WENT... RIGHT *THROUGH*... ITS... *THE DEVIL*..!

THE VAMPIRE *LUNGES*. HIS LOATHSOME FANGS *PUNCTURE* PREGNANT VEINS...

...AND LIEUTENANT NATE ROBBINS *SCREAMS*...

..IN *BELIEF*...

..A BELIEF *SPAWNED* IN HIS *DEATH*.

YAAAAHHHH!

DRAINED OF *BLOOD*, LIEUTENANT ROBBINS IS NO LONGER OF *CONCERN* TO THE NOCTURNAL FIEND... AND SO, HIS CORPSE IS CARELESSLY CAST *ASIDE*...

...AS THE VAMPIRE FIXES ITS AVID GAZE ON A PETRIFIED *DRUMMER BOY*...

...A BOY WHO HAS NEVER KNOWN HOW TO DO ANYTHING BUT *DRUM* IN THE FACE OF DANGER...

HE *DRUMS*... AS HE HAS NEVER BEFORE DRUMMED... AND THE VAMPIRE SILENTLY *STALKS* HIM...

BRRRP-
BRRRP-
BRRP-
PP-PP

HIS STICKS RIPPLE OVER THE STRETCHED SKIN OF HIS INSTRUMENT UNTIL THE ROLLING THRUM *FILLS* THE FOREST... AND SEEMS TO *SHAKE* THE VERY *OAKS*..

BRRRPIPP--
BRRRIPP--
BRRRP--IPP--
PP--PP!

HE DRUMS... UNTIL THE VAMPIRE STOPS HIS DRUMMING... WITH THE BRUTAL SLAP OF A PRETERNATURALLY STRONG HAND...
WHAMP
KLAK-TIK
FALLEN DRUMSTICKS ... FATE ... TO DEBILITATING EFFECT OF THE CROSS...
...AN EFFECT STEEPED WITH A SIGNIFICANCE THE VAMPIRE FEELS ... LIKE ACID SPLASHED SEARING IN HIS FACE...
FFFFSSSSS
BUT AN EFECT TO WHICH THE DRUMMER BOY IS IGNORANT...
AND IGNORANT, HE CLUTCHES DESPERATELY FOR THE PRECIOUS STICKS, THE ONLY THINGS HE HAS LEFT! HE DESTROYS THE ERSATZ CRUCIFIX...
AND CONFIDENCE RESTORED, THE VAMPIRE SURGES TOWARD ITS EASY PREY...
...ONLY TO IMPALE ITSELF ON THE LETHAL DRUMSTICK...
A DRUMSTICK OF WOOD, NOT UNLIKE A SHARPENED STAKE...
AARRG
CHOOK
THE TERRIFIED DRUMMER BOY KNOWS LITTLE OF VAMPIRES AND WOODEN STAKES... BUT, SENSING DEATH IN THE HELLISH, IMPALED FORM ABOVE HIM, HE PULLS HIMSELF FROM UNDER THE BLOOD BEAST'S CORPSE...
...AND RUNS... TO WARN THE COLONIES OF THE DEVIL WHICH STALKED THE WOODS THIS NIGHT.
HE DOES NOT KNOW THAT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE HIM UNTIL THE LATE LIEUTENANT, NATE ROBBINS, RETURNS FROM HIS LAST BATTLE. .
ONLY THEN WILL PEOPLE BELIEVE...
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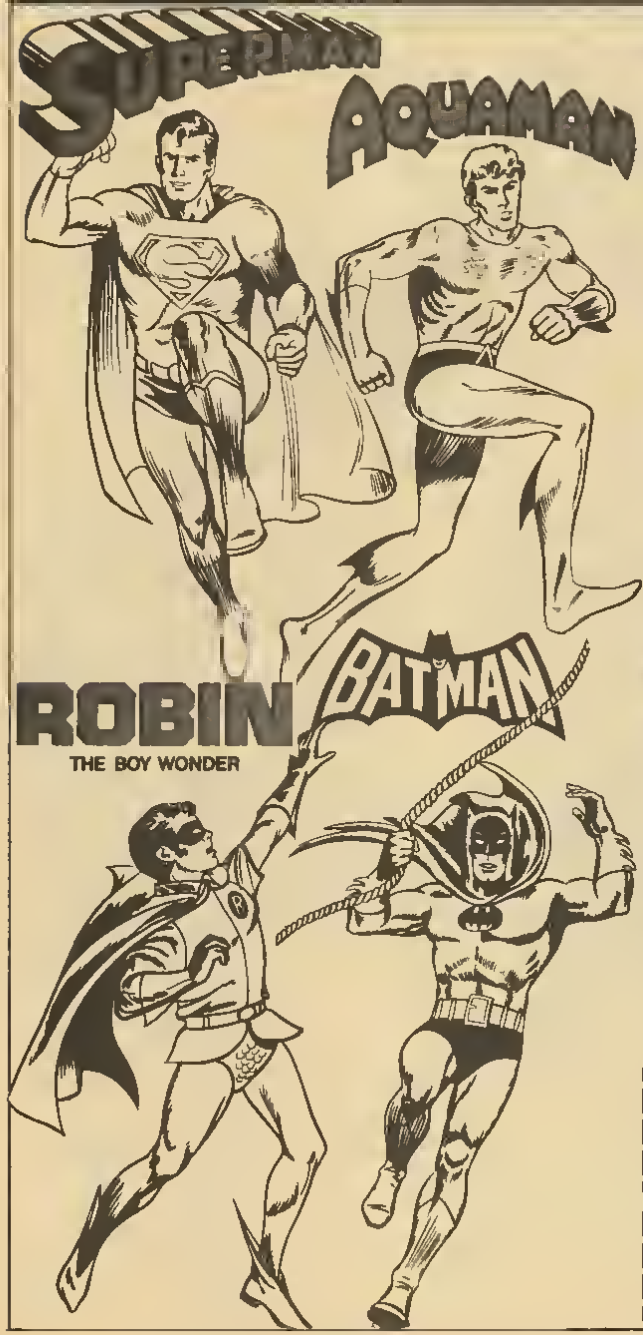

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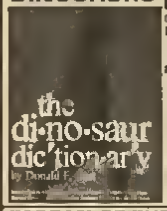

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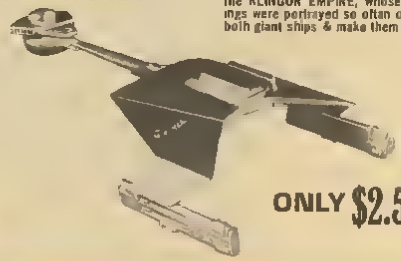

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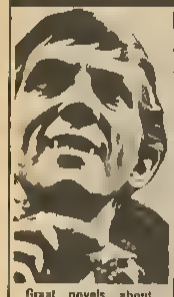

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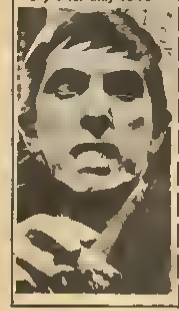

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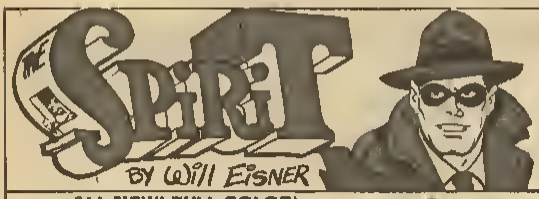

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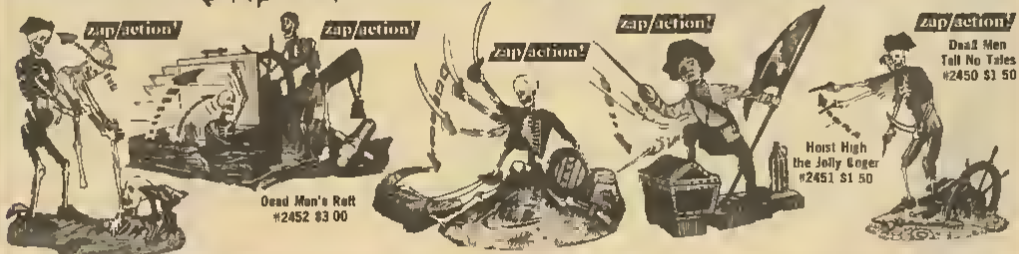

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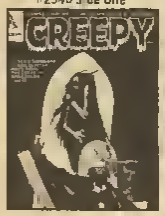

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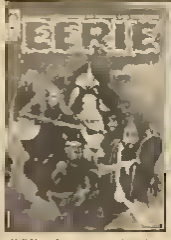

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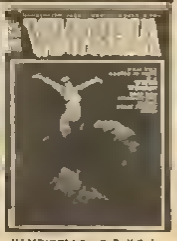

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AXE-PRESS YOURSELF!

Your own slogan, favorite saying, or your name—any thing you want to say UP TO 30 LETTERS (counting the spaces between words)! Custom printed in non-fade letters on your choice of blue or gray long-sleeved sweatshirt or T-shirt. With Navy Blue shirt you get white lettering, with Gray shirt, you get black lettering. This item comes in Adult Small and Adult Medium sizes, and the lettering really lasts, so be certain to say something you're sure is really a "quotable quote." After all, a Personalized shirt really is a—

GREAT WAY TO MEET PEOPLE!

Remember, first impressions are lasting ones (as the headsman said)! So choose your 30 letters (counting the spaces as letters) with care, and write them in the space indicated in the coupon below. The T-shirts (blue or gray) cost only $4.25 for this beautiful hand-crafted work, and the long-sleeved sweatshirts (blue or gray) are only $5.49. This is surely one of the finest bargains you'll find anywhere! Order now!

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VAMPIRELLA T-SHIRT

WEAR YOUR VERY OWN WASHABLE VAMP! RIGHT NEXT TO YOUR HEART!

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Rush me my VAMPIRELLA T-SHIRT (My size is indicated below)

☐ #2704 ADULT SMALL (34-36)
☐ #2705 ADULT MEDIUM (38-40)
☐ #2706 ADULT LARGE (42-44)
☐ #2707 BOYS MEDIUM (10)

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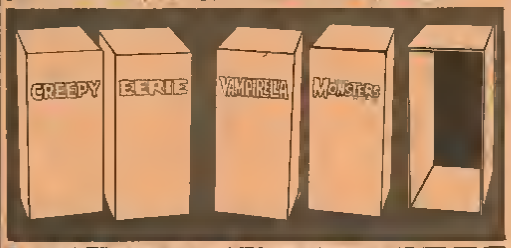
SAVE YOUR MONSTERS!

& CREEPY'S & EERIE'S & VAMPI'S TOO!

PRESERVE YOUR BACK ISSUES IN EASY-REFERENCE LIBRARY CASES!

Protect your valuable back issues of our fantastic Warren Publishing Company magazines. Remember, each issue will someday be a collector's item, and your copies will be in fine mint-fresh condition if you box them now for their protection. For serious fans and collectors of CREEPY, EERIE, VAMPIRELLA & FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND MAGAZINES we've brought out this stunning line of LIBRARY CASES. Each one holds two year's worth of a title, and is bound in a prestigious leatherette finish with gold type on the spine. FM's case is colored wine-red; CREEPY, navy-blue; EERIE, dark green and VAMPIRELLA, red-orange, like the costume she wears. Order today!



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WORLD-FAMOUS Magnajector lets you project any picture in this magazine onto your wall or screen . . . UP TO 4 FEET WIDE! No films or negatives needed. Simply rest the instrument over the magazine or book page, photograph or any other object, and like magic, the picture is seen BIG & CLEAR on the wall in front of you. See veins in leaves . . . details of insects . . . monster faces . . . photos of you or your friends or family. GIANT SIZE on the wall. Order your Magnajector today. Loads of fun and a great help in school work, for art, science, etc. Only $8.95 plus 70¢ for postage and handling. Specify #2604

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OVER 300 PAGES OF FANTASTIC INFO & PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTIONS!

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THE MOST REALISTIC REPLICA OF THE MIGHTIEST GORILLA EVER! DURABLE TOUGH VINYL! BIG 7" TALL! YOU'LL WANT TO HAVE ONE OF THESE TOUGH, UGLY MONSTROUS GORILLAS FOR YOUR OWN. SCARE YOUR FRIENDS! DECORATE YOUR ROOM IN MONSTERIFIC FASHION! SLIP ONE TO A BUDDY & WATCH HIM SQUIRM! YOU WON'T BELIEVE HOW AUTHENTIC & LIFELIKE THIS GRUESOME GORILLA IS! SEND FOR YOUR TODAY. ONLY $1.00 plus 49¢ postage & handling (Total $1.49). Please Specify Item #2607

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INFLATABLE 2-FT. LONG PINK VINYL

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THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN STARRING IN A ROCK & ROLL COMIC ADVENTURE! Hear all your favorite Spidermen characters in the ROCKOMIC "From Beyond the Grave!" 5 spine-tingling episodes—ORIGINAL Songs (words & music) by The Webspinners Magnificent FULL COLOR album jacket including inside two-cover spread showing Spidey's adventures in comic strip form. Hear the dramatic voices of Spiderman, Aunt May & Special Guest Star OR STRANGE! Snarl at vicious villains the Vulture, Lizard, Ringpin & Green Goblin! A true COLLECTOR'S ITEM—Don't miss out—ORDER TODAY!

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THE MALTESE FALCON was a jinxed statuette that brought death to thousands! Bogey as gumshoe Sam Spade is immortal! Also Bogey in "Love's Lovely Counterfeit." $5.95

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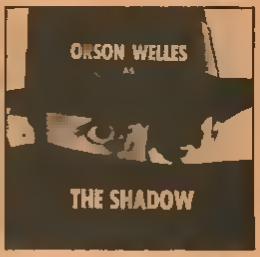

This century's greatest actor, Orson Welles, as THE SHADOW, telepathically searching down evil diamond thieves who prey on helpless Africans. Classic! $5.95

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TWO VAMPIRELLA'S STUN 5,500 AT 1973 COMIC ART CONVENTION

By Gerry Boudreau

Together for the first time **Cheech Wizard, Big Barda, the Demon, Batman, the Ghost Rider, Ming the Merciless, Spiderman, Two-Face, Elric, Mr. Mind**, and not one but two devastating VAMPIRELLAS! Where did this historic congregation take place? In some secret secluded fortress in the Arctic? In the warped imagination of some desperate comic book writer? No, at the Hotel Commodore, on East 42nd Street in downtown New York City

The occasion was the Sixth Annual **New York Comic Art Convention**, highlighted by a colorful costume parade which, in imagination and splendor, rivals the Macy's Thanksgiving Day outings! (Well, almost!)

Although first prize honors went to Corlandt Hull as Ming the Merciless, who captured the image of the villainous tyrant flawlessly, it was undoubtedly the two Vampirellas who captured the hearts of the 5500 fans gathered for the five-day affair

The first of them was a well-proportioned brunette actress, known professionally as **Destiny** who is as ravishing as **Vampi** herself The other was everybody's favorite fan, 14½ year old **Heidi Saha**, whose distinguished costume was one of the three grand-prize winners

Judges for the event were artists **Jeff Jones, Sergio Aragones** and **Tom Fagan**, chairman of the annual Halloween parade in Rutland, Vermont which is also known for its influx of bizarre and colorful costumes Their task was made especially difficult by the number of unique and worthy entries which included, in addition to the already mentioned comic luminaries, the golden age Green Lantern the Joker, J Jonah Jameson, The Marquis deSaad, Darkseid and the Juggernaut

Among the other highlights of the Fourth of July convention was a panel on **war comics**, specifically **Warren Magazines' Blazing Combat.** The panel featured artist **Russ Heath**, writer-editor of Blazing Combat **Archie Goodwin**, and publisher **James Warren** himself The panel explored the attitude of the public toward war (or anti-war) comics at the time, and explained several of the factors behind the magazine's untimely demise This was augmented by a slide show featuring the art of **Russ Heath**, and projected a number of original pages from the magazine before its appreciative audience

Another panel brought the industry's writers to the fore to reveal all the professional secrets they had promised themselves they would never tell These included **Warren** writers **Steve Skeates, Marty Pasko, Gerry Boudreau** and **John David Warner**, along with the industry's other veterans **Mike Friedrich, Steve Englehart, Elliot Maggin**, and **E Nelson Bridwell**

Also included in the five day program were a number of films which delighted both comic and science-fiction fans These included the **Beatles'** animated feature "Yellow Submarine", **Stanley Kubrick's** "2001 A Space Odyssey", **The Marx Brothers** "Room Service" and several vintage science fiction flicks "The Day the Earth Stood Still", "Three Worlds of Gulliver", **George Pal's** "War of the Worlds", "King Kong", and the original Batman serial

Intermingled with these outstanding events were seminars, panels, auctions exhibits, and the usual buying and selling of comic magazines, one of the most overlooked but most important functions of the conventions

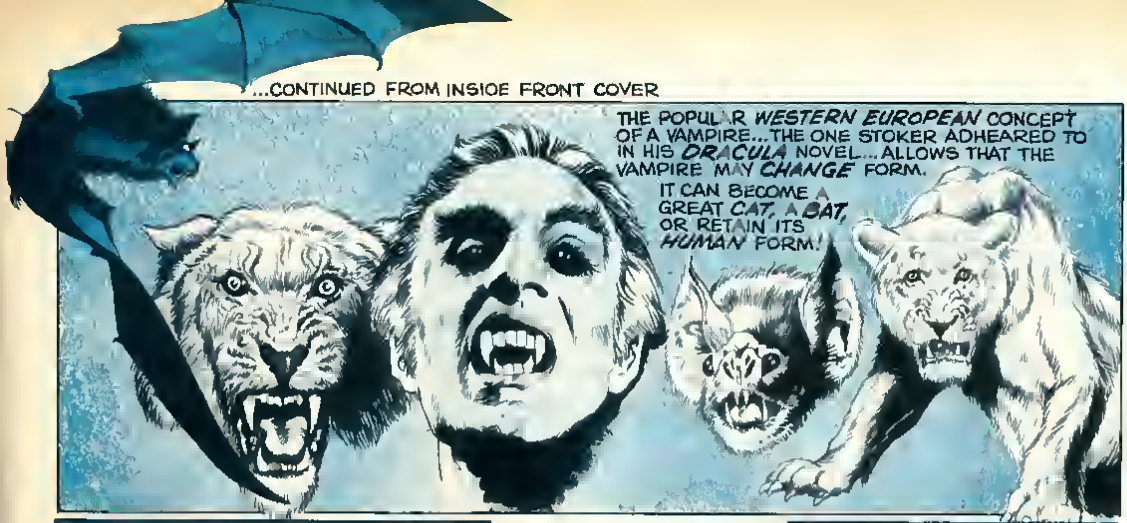
The conventions themselves originated some six years ago when Brooklyn comics dealer **Phil Seuling** created the first Annual New York Comic Art Convention for an attending 750 people Now the attending membership has grown to 5500, with thousands of supporters unable to be there in person

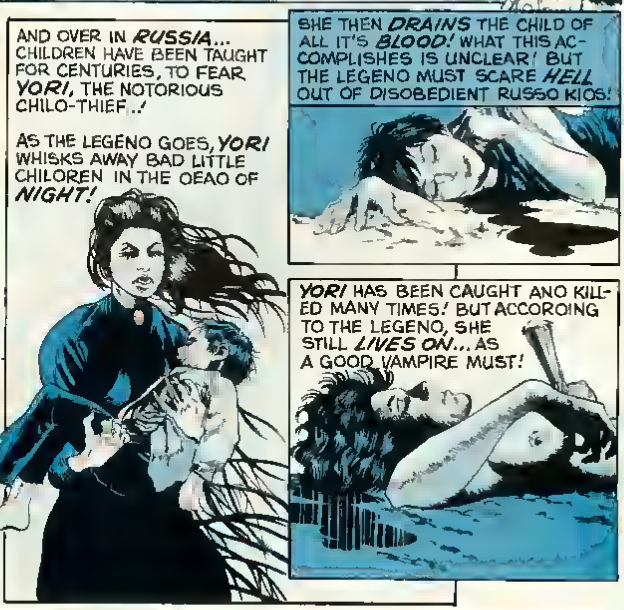
Who knows—next year there may be **fifty** VAMPIRELLAS appearing in the costume parade! If they are nearly as impressiva as this year's entries (and I'm sure they will be), you are likely to see 5500 comic fans with bloodshot eyes when you consider the stares that only **two** drew!

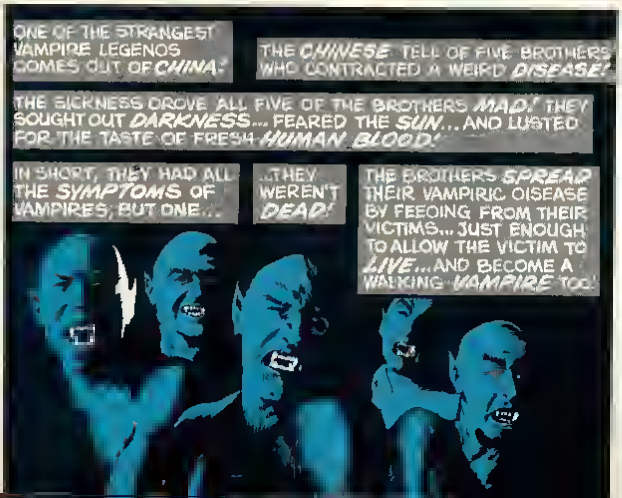
Miss Angelique Trouvere, actress-turned-vampire, uses the stage name, Destiny. When she appeared in her VAMPIRELLA costume at the 1973 Comic Art Convention, she was the hit of the show!

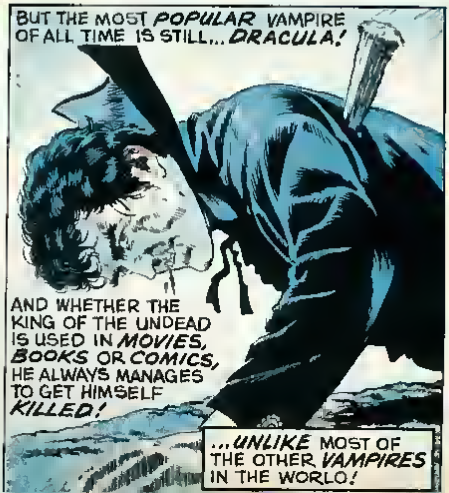
Miss Heidi Saha, a 14½-year-old comic fan, caused quite a stir at the Hotel Commodore when she made her entrance in her award-winning VAMPIRELLA costume. It was like having Vampi come to life!

...CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER





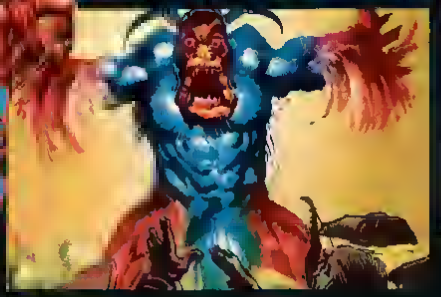




NEXT ISSUE OF VAMPIRELLA

He's young! He's beautiful! And he's in love! He's a demon from the lower depths, conjured up by a coven of witches. And he's been ordered to KILL!

AS THOUGH THEY WERE LIVING!



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MORE SUPER-ART, SUPER STORIES AND SUPER-COLOR FROM THE TALENTED BUT WARPED MIND OF RICH CORBEN!

AND SOON IN CREEPY:

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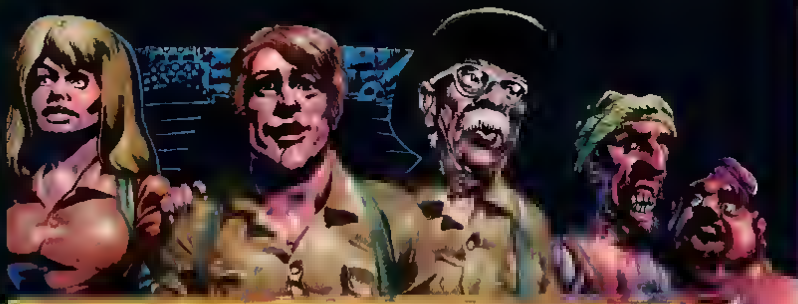

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TERROR TOMB